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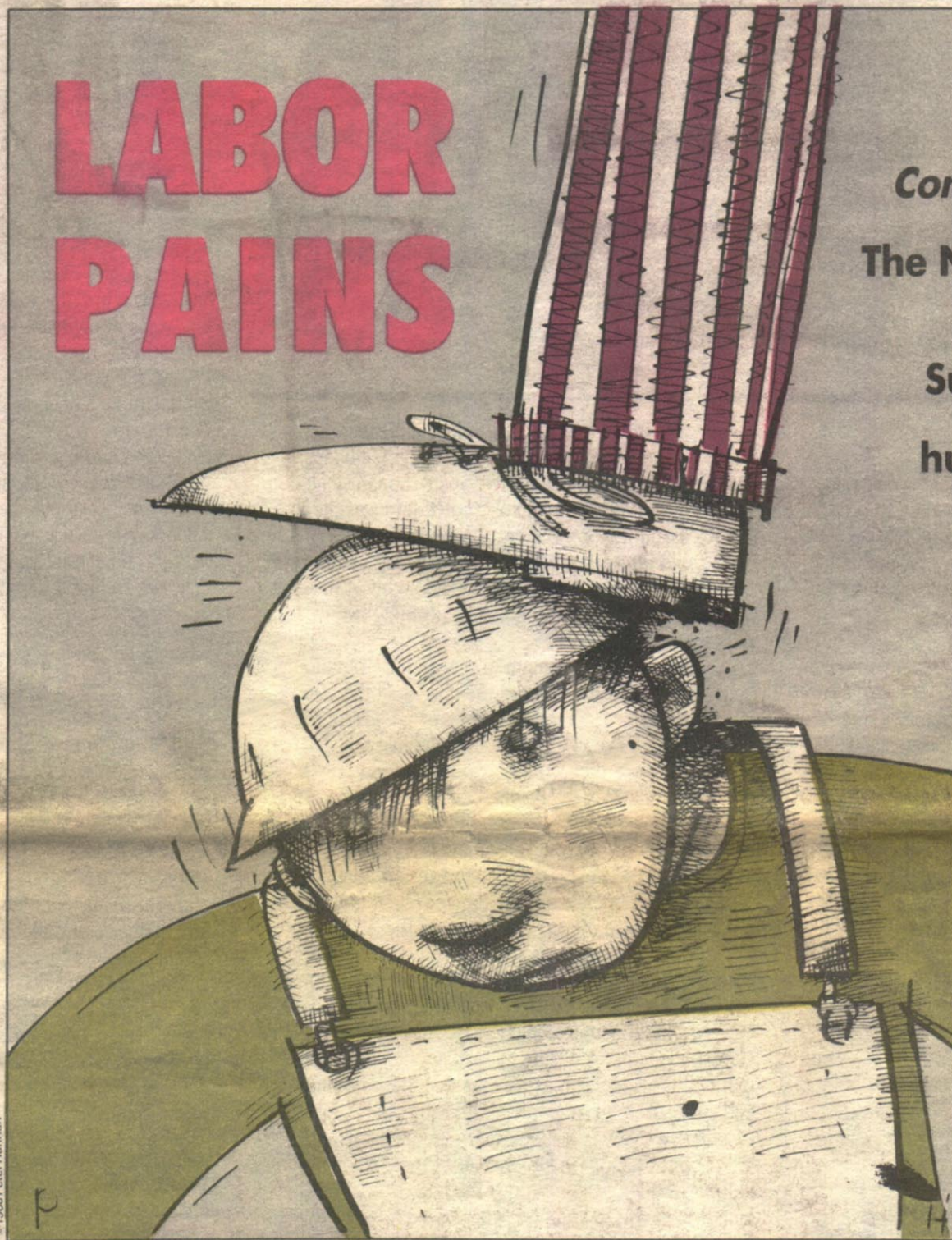
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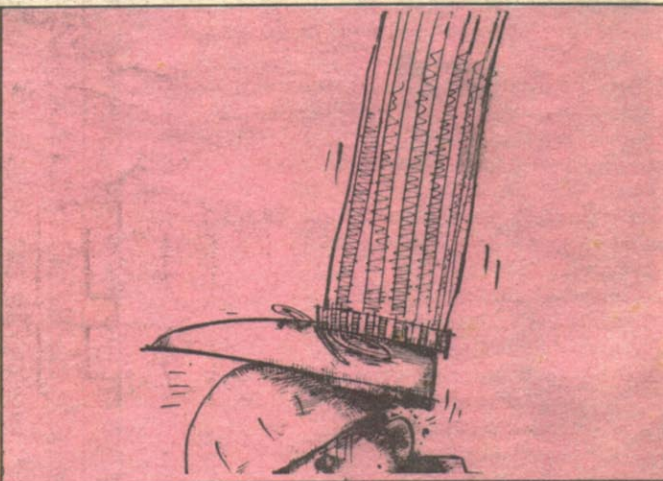
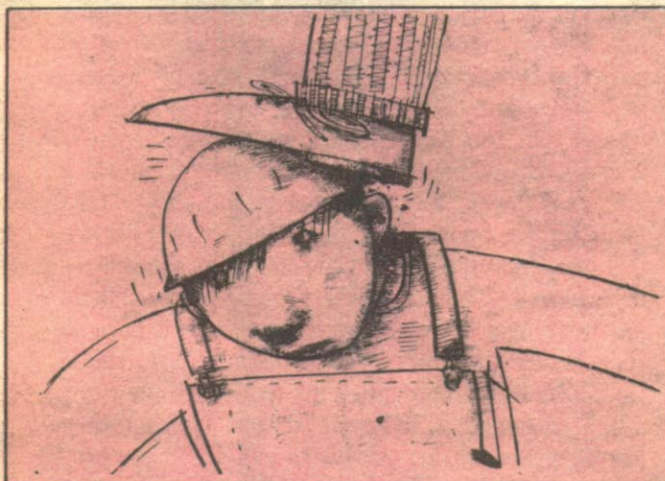


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Consumer Reports' nice liberals just happen to be union-busters



By Daniel Lazare

NEW YORK

Everyone expects right-wing businessmen to break unions. But what happens when good progressives, the kind of nice people who care about poverty and homelessness and keeping consumers well-informed, try to break unions as well?

This is the question confronting 180 employees of Consumers Union (CU), publishers of the monthly magazine *Consumer Reports*. The company has been waging a war of attrition against its union, The Newspaper Guild, since the mid-'70s. In 1980, Consumers Union shut down its subscription-processing division and fired 167 workers, causing the labor union to lose half its strength. In 1984, it provoked a three-month strike when it demanded that the Guild give up key jurisdictional language in its contract limiting the kind of work managers and non-union outsiders could perform. Victorious in that particular struggle, management demanded at the next round of contract talks that half of Guild members' next wage increase be set aside in the form of a "merit pool" for management to dole out in raises only to individual employees it deems deserving.

The suit doesn't fit: Finally, late last year, Consumers Union slapped two Guild leaders with a lawsuit because of letters they wrote to Consumers Union members apprising them of the anti-union campaign, and because someone—no one is quite willing to say who—posted a

confidential list of management salary increases on a Guild bulletin board at a time when union members hadn't seen a raise in nearly two years. A management spokesman said the letters constituted an invasion of privacy and misappropriation of confidential information. But a Guild attorney labelled the suit, which names the two union members but not the Guild, an effort to separate employees from their unions and "bully two working stiffs through the courts."

"It's designed to chill them in the exercise of union rights guaranteed them under the law," said the attorney, Irwin Bluestein. "I've represented labor unions for 17 years now and I've never seen anything like this."

All this from a non-profit magazine that not only tells you which mattress retains its spring longest and which car has the best service record, but rails against deceptive advertising practices and runs concerned, hard-hitting articles about AIDS and the plight of the working poor. Although Consumers Union began with seed money from organized labor during the Depression, the AFL-CIO now has the magazine on its boycott list alongside such notorious union-busters as Armour meat and California table-grape growers. CU employees, meanwhile, have launched a publicity campaign that outlines, as one Guild communication put it, "the hypocrisy of an organization that publishes [socially-conscious material]...on one hand and squeezes its own employees on the other." Around Consumers Union's headquarters—an imposing pre-World War I optics factory in Mt. Vernon, N.Y.—employees picket, wear red-and-white buttons reading "Don't Buy Consumer Reports" and wonder when, if ever, they will get their next contract.

"Morale stinks," said one employee. "People feel betrayed, betrayed by management." Added Michael Echols, a senior editor and long-time Guild activist: "I used to think I'd be at this job until I died at my desk at age 80 on a weekend. Now I would just like to get out."

Merit pay's lack of merit: The Guild objects to the merit-pay proposal because it would lead to inequities and deprive the union of its most basic function, bargaining for wages. The Guild also points out that there is nothing in its contract to prevent Consumers Union from rewarding individual employees over and above the salary scale it negotiates with the Guild. The real issue, the Guild believes, is not merit pay or union jurisdiction, but management's long-term strategy to tame a once-powerful labor organization.

"I think the goal is to gain total control over the organization," said Gordon Hard, the vice chair of the Guild unit. "I think the aim is not to make the union disappear but to render it toothless."

The struggle at Consumers Union is ironic, primarily because CU itself was born of a strike against an organization known as Consumers Research in 1936. When the workers found themselves locked out and fired, they decided to launch their own publication with a financial assist from friendly unions. Consumers Union's original

charter was expressly pro-labor: not only was the new organization to educate consumers, but it was "to seek a decent standard of living" for them as well. However innocuous its ratings of computers and toasters may seem today, Consumers Union and its employees' union, District 65 of Distribution Workers of America (now affiliated with the United Auto Workers), actually made it onto the House UnAmerican Activities Committee's list of subversive organizations in the early '50s. For political protection, the workers eventually voted out District 65 and affiliated with the more conservative, anti-Communist Newspaper Guild instead.

A bit of that old political coloration still lingers around Consumers Union's upper echelons—but only a bit. Besides the articles on AIDS and the working poor, the company recently sponsored a conference on the poor in Washington and published a book-length photo essay of life below the poverty line. Consumers Union's board of directors includes such prominent consumer-movement figures as NBC-TV's Betty Furness, Public Citizen's Joan Claybrook and Clarence Ditlow of the Center for Auto Safety. The board also has a sprinkling of liberals from the world of politics—former Texas State Sen. Lloyd Doggett who ran unsuccessfully for U.S. Senate against Republican Phil Gramm; Rosemary Pooler, a Democratic candidate for Congress from Syracuse, N.Y.; and James A. Guest, former secretary of state to Vermont Gov. Madeleine Kunin and now a Democratic candidate for Vermont's sole congressional seat.

Not one board member has spoken out against Consumers Union's war on The Guild. "I don't have a union background; I'm just an auto-safety individual," explained Clarence Ditlow. "...I don't know what union-busting is,

INSIDE STORY

and I don't think it's happening at Consumers Union.... The [Guild] has given talks at board meetings, but that's it, there's really been no discussion of the union's position." Other board members refused to comment, referring all questions to James Guest, the board president. Guest, a protege of Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA), recently angered organized labor when he came out against raising the minimum wage and a law requiring advance notice for factory closings. He refused to comment as well.

A New-Right Old Leftist? But the person who best sums up Consumers Union's odyssey from the working-class left to anti-labor liberalism is its \$147,000-a-year executive director, Rhoda Karparkin. An attorney, the 57-year-old Karparkin is known to wax nostalgic about the Spanish Republic. Her late husband, Marvin, who died in 1975, served as American Civil Liberties Union counsel and defended draft resisters during the Vietnam War. A daughter, Deborah, is a former staff attorney with the New Jersey Civil Liberties Union, while a son, Jeremy, is the former youth organizer for the Democratic Socialists of America and now heads up Paul Simon's presidential campaign in New York. Colleagues say Rhoda Karparkin is dedicated and hard-working, takes a keen personal interest in the plight of the homeless, and, they add, is fundamentally intolerant of dissent.

"I think what she wants is something like the style of management in a law firm where the partners are the productive employees and everyone else are service personnel tending and grooming the partners," said The Guild's Michael Echols. "She's the type of person who simply cannot adjust to a truly collegial approach where low-level people help decide what to say."

Hence the war on The Guild. Although Consumers Union experienced some hard times in the '70s and early '80s, money, in view of last year's record \$7-million "surplus," is no longer a problem. Rather, the problem, according to one employee, is that "it's a hard time for unions, and nobody seems to give a shit anymore if a union gets busted"—least of all liberals.

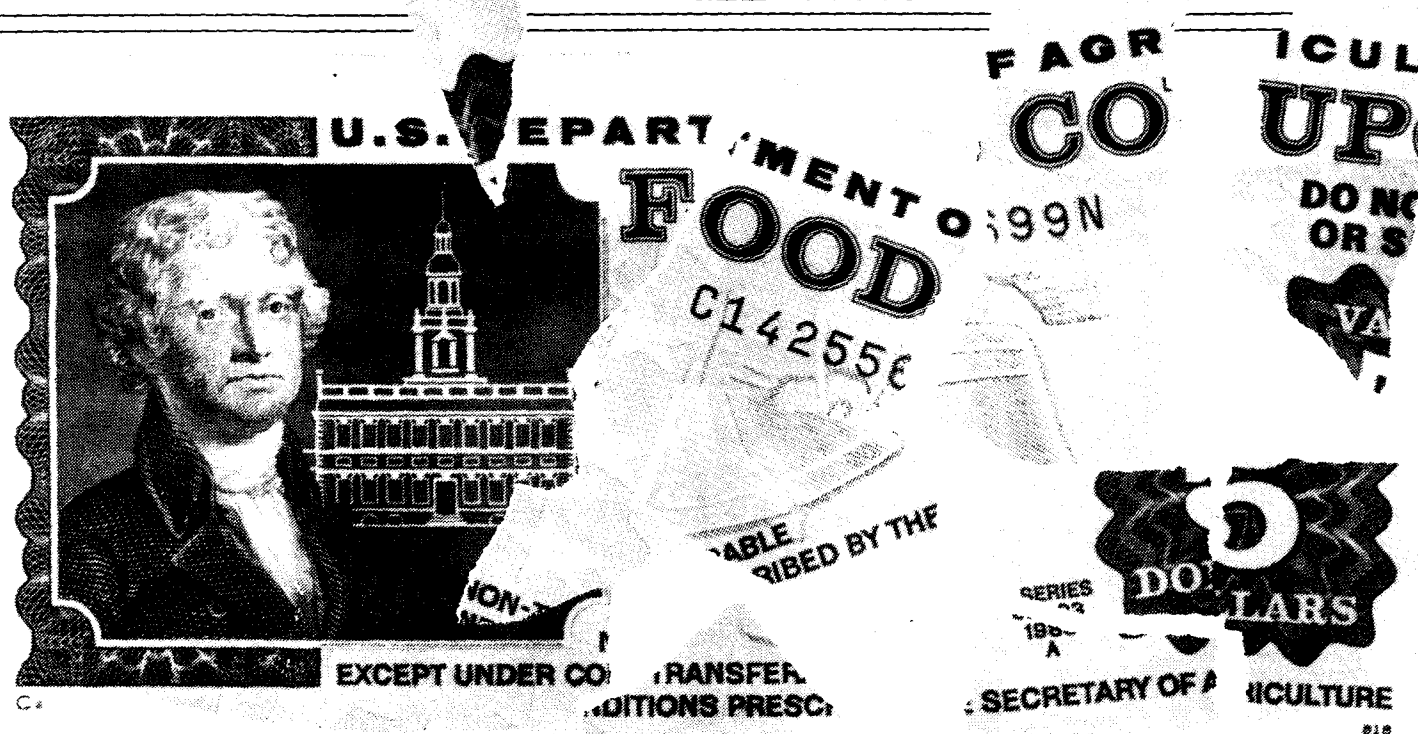
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Court helps ensure poor workers won't strike

By David Moberg

IF THE MORAL CHARACTER OF A SOCIETY'S governing bodies is tested in how they treat the most vulnerable members of that society, the U.S. Supreme Court flunked again.

By a 5-3 majority the court decided that Congress did not act unconstitutionally in 1981 when it prohibited providing food stamps for a striker and his or her family, even though the striker met all other conditions for getting the stamps—that is, sufficiently poor and willing to work. Effectively, the court said that Congress could penalize families, even small children, if an adult worker exercised his or her federally protected rights to collective action, even against illegal actions of an employer.

Of course, the court majority didn't see things quite this way. In the March 23 opinion overturning a district court decision in favor of the United Auto Workers' (UAW) challenge to the law, Justice Byron White argued that only in "isolated" and "exceedingly unlikely" instances would workers' rights to association or speech be threatened by this penalty. The Constitution does not require providing funds, White wrote, "to maximize the exercise of the right of association or to minimize any resulting economic hardship."

Everyone agreed that only a small number of strikers have ever gotten food stamps—about 4 to 11 percent of strikers, according to a Government Accounting Office study, or about .2 percent of all households getting food stamps that were not on public aid. Of course, that admission weakens the court majority argument that Congress was rationally and legitimately acting simply to save public funds.

But the people affected are the most vulnerable, workers who are already near poverty and comparatively powerless to press their claims against employers. "This decision...makes it very difficult for low-paid workers," said University of Pennsylvania law professor Clyde Summers. "It hits the poorest segments of society in a most brutal, inhuman way," legitimizing employers starving a worker's children to win a labor dispute.

Unmeaningful rights: It would be easy

to argue that rights to association and speech become abstract and hollow for people who for economic reasons can't exercise those rights, or when real world inequality makes a mockery of competing rights. The court obviously is unsympathetic to that view, but the record on this point is mixed. In a long series of cases in recent decades the court has decided that poor people must be provided defense counsel and can't be denied transcripts of their trials just because they're indigent. Those cases implicitly say that subsidies are sometimes necessary for rights to be meaningful.

In a different vein, Congress explicitly said in the landmark New Deal labor legislation of the '30s that individual workers were powerless to confront their employers unless they were organized. Congress clearly stated a public policy in favor of collective bargaining, giving legislative support to make workers' individual rights meaningful. Also, the New Deal legislation explicitly protected collective action, which, unlike individual

"This decision...hits the poorest segments of society in a most brutal, inhuman way," says one legal expert.

rights, has at best fuzzy protection under the Bill of Rights.

But the question of redressing economic and social inequality to protect rights is not really at issue in this case, although the majority decision makes it appear so. The issue raised by the 1981 legislation was the constitutionality of a congressional penalty on strikers, not of any special funding for strikers. "The [Supreme Court] majority magically transformed a clear penalty into a subsidy," argued American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) associate legal director Helen Hershkoff, who backed the UAW lawsuit. "The question is whether the government can use taxing and spending powers to buy up the Bill of Rights."

It was clear from a long legislative history before 1981, during which cutoff of food

stamps for strikers was frequently rejected, that conservative lawmakers wanted the cutoff to punish strikers. For example, under current law, if a worker quits his employer for "good cause" and takes another, lower-paying job, he may qualify for food stamps. But if another worker strikes over the same good cause, takes a low-paying job and meets all qualifications, he cannot get food stamps.

The central challenge: This kind of discrimination in a federal, needs-based program violates the constitutional requirement of equal protection under the law and impermissibly forces workers to give up their association with the union or strike in order to get benefits to which they should be entitled, the UAW and ACLU argued. The court had decided in the past that states could either deny or grant unemployment benefits to strikers. Only a few states provide such benefits and some deny unemployment benefits to locked-out workers or workers idled indirectly because of any labor dispute. But in those cases, benefits were triggered simply by the strike, not a legal standard of need, and were directly funded by employers. Whatever one thinks about unemployment benefits for strikers, those cases are clearly different from food stamps.

But the majority basically ignored the central challenge of discriminatory treatment and even admitted that "it would be difficult to deny that this statute works at least some discrimination against strikers and their households." (Strikers previously receiving food stamps can continue to get the same amount but no increase due to greater need.) It accepted the Reagan administration's argument that Congress was acting simply to save money and to avoid "undue favoritism in private labor disputes."

In many ways, the heart of the majority decision is this acceptance of Congress' decision about how to be "neutral." But as Justice Thurgood Marshall argued in his dissent (joined by Justices Harry Blackmun and William Brennan), "the 'neutrality' argument on its merits is both deceptive and deeply flawed." For example, supervisors or other management personnel who might be affected by a strike aren't prohibited from getting food stamps.

More important, Marshall argued, "individuals and businesses are connected to the government by a complex web of supports and incentives." Businesses may receive tax deductions (even for losses incurred during the strike), depreciation, tax credits, government contracts, protection from creditors under the Bankruptcy Act and direct subsidies (such as Small Business Administration loans or, in a case cited by the UAW, job training funds to train strikebreakers). None of those benefits requires that employers abstain from strikes. And even if workers initiate strikes, they are often pushed into it by their boss' actions, and in most cases have no other meaningful way of making their point. Strikes are thus not simple "voluntary" actions, argues James Atleson, law professor at the State University of New York.

"When viewed against the network of governmental support of both labor and management, the withdrawal of the single support of food stamps—a support critical to the continued life and health of an individual worker and his or her family—cannot be seen as a 'neutral' act," Marshall wrote. "Altering the backdrop of governmental support in this one-sided and devastating way amounts to a penalty on strikers, not neutrality."

Separate, not equal: "It's self-evident that denying benefits is not a neutral act," says Richard McHugh, the lead UAW attorney in the case. But McHugh and others argue that federal policy has never been and never can be neutral.

"Federal labor policy is not intended to be evenhanded," says historian and attorney Staughton Lynd. "It is intended to provide more equality [between workers and employers]. Even with the Wagner Act and other federal legislation, the employer is overwhelmingly more powerful. To fulfill the public purpose of putting workers on a basis of equality, you need more intervention, not less, on the side of workers. As long as workers have the right to strike once every two or three years and managers can close down the plant any day of the week, we're not within shouting distance of equality. The fundamental error of Supreme Court jurisprudence in labor law is the assumption of this equality once you have a union."

Government "neutrality" comes up as an issue in two different contexts, Summers argues. On whether or not there should be collective bargaining, the law isn't neutral—although the support has been eroded. Then there's the question of which weapons each side can use. "The law has never been neutral," he said. "It's been a mix. Wherever the balance was before, you change the balance. What we need to do is ask, 'Is the balance where we would like it?' I think we ought to move it in the direction of helping low-income workers."

In addition, as Northeastern University law professor Karl Klare says, the social and economic inequality that forms the background to any dispute is hardly a "neutral" fact of life. That inequality partly reflects decisions of courts and the legislature; indeed, the very foundations of the "private" economic system—from creation of corporations to protection of contracts and private property—are creations of the political and legal system.

"Neutrality" in this case is simply a convenient and misleading fiction to justify action to support the wealthy against the weak. □

INSHORT

By Joel Bleifuss

Blood on the tuna

Tens of thousands of dolphins continue to be slaughtered by a U.S. tuna fleet that has "reflagged" in order to skirt the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (see *In Short*, Sept. 30, 1987, February 10). Sam LaBudde, a former U.S. government biologist, spent four months working undercover on a Latin American tuna boat. LaBudde describes his experience this way: "Listening to 500 dolphins striking in panic as they fight against the net and gasp for air, seeing crew members toss a baby dolphin back and forth like a football, standing by helplessly as living dolphins were dragged aloft thrashing and flailing in terror before being literally crushed to death in the power block—is enough to make anyone give up eating tuna for life." Last month LaBudde's videotapes of tuna-boat dolphin slaughter made the network news. As Dan Rather warned the viewers, these scenes "could change your eating habits." A variety of environmental and animal-rights groups are calling for a boycott of all products produced by the two leading dolphin killers, H.J. Heinz (StarKist Tuna) and Ralston Purina (Chicken of the Sea).

Administration aids dolphin slaughter

If the dolphin-slaughter video hasn't changed the nation's eating habits, it has instigated congressional hearings. On April 13 the Senate and House will begin an oversight review of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The act sets limits on the number of dolphins the U.S. tuna fleet can kill each year. One question the Senate will want answered is why "foreign" fishermen on reflagged U.S. vessels who import tuna in to the U.S. have failed to comply with the U.S. kill-limits as Congress required in a 1984 amendment to the act. A staff member of the Senate Commerce Committee told *In These Times* that, "coincidentally," the Commerce Department established that 1984 amendment as a federal regulation on March 18, just after scenes of dying dolphins made national news. Further, the department is giving "foreign" fishermen until 1991 to comply with the 1984 amendment. What is the Commerce Department doing? The committee staff member replied, "That is the question that has to be asked."

Hold the toxics

Each year McDonald's uses about 70 million pounds of the chemical polystyrene to produce billions of styrofoam burger packages. And each day McDonald's adds 2.3 million cubic feet of this non-biodegradable, non-recyclable plastic trash to the environment. Production of styrofoam produces air emissions that destroy the earth's ozone. Those same gases are also produced when the styrofoam is burned. To help give the world a break, today, the Citizens' Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste of Arlington, Va., is calling for people to take "McAction" during Earth Day Week (April 19-25).

The shark has teeth

More than 94 percent of the CEO's (chief executive officers) polled by *Fortune* magazine said they wanted to keep the presidency Republican in November. Explaining why we should pay attention to their preference, *Fortune* said, "Fortune 500 CEOs in general possess greater than average means to get theirs."

Get yours

Office Manager's Handbook of People Power Strategies is the ultimate self-help guide for today's executive. According to publisher Edward Carlton of Englewood Cliffs, N.J., this book will teach you how "to manipulate the paranoid personality," how "to get unmotivated, lazy clerical help to shape up," how to "keep employees content by feeding their egos instead of their wallets," how to influence people by "using certain people's tendencies to misinterpret reality," and "how to appeal to other people's greed, guilt and ego."

New fiction

"In a league of its own" is how one reviewer characterized Arthur L. Hoffman's new novel, *Tail Tigerswallow and the Great Tobacco War*. This "near-future fantasy" is the tale of Glenn Morgan, an anti-smoking advocate, and Joel Hammond, tobacco mogul. According to Armador Publisher of Albuquerque, N.M., the story goes like this: "A guerrilla army is mobilized and Glenn is its general. His principal adversary, Joel Hammond, chief executive of-



Air Force report implicates Agent Orange

Vietnam veterans plagued by poor health that they claim is linked to Agent Orange won crucial support March 22 when two U.S. senators released a revised Air Force study on the dioxin-laden defoliant. The Air Force reported that it could "not exonerate dioxin as an agent of causality" for liver, neurological and psychological disorders, as well as cancer and birth defects.

Reviewing conclusions from a 1984 study of military personnel who handled the defoliant, the Air Force found a positive correlation to potential adverse health effects in five of the 11 criteria analyzed. The previous 1984 conclusions had sought to reassure veterans that their problems were not related to the herbicide.

"What they're doing is trying to reverse themselves without really saying so," Eric Hamburg, an aide to Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) told the *New York Times*. Kerry and Sen. Thomas Daschle (D-SD) both Vietnam vets, unveiled the revised study as part of their push for legislation to compensate Agent Orange-affected vets.

Between 1960 and 1971, crew members with the 12th Air Commando Squadron—subjects of the military's 20-year health study—sprayed Vietnam's jungles with an estimated 13 million gallons of Agent

Orange. That included 360 pounds of pure TCDD-dioxin, an Agent Orange byproduct that is the most lethal chemical ever made by man. The Pentagon suspended the use of Agent Orange in 1970 when previously-suppressed studies indicated a link to birth defects in rodents.

"For years I've felt that trusting the Veterans Administration and the Air Force on this is akin to asking Dracula to guard the blood bank," says Joe Bangert, head of Boston's Vietnam Veterans Association. "Our claims have often been dismissed as emotional 'Orange-mail,' that we were just beating on the government to get money out of them. But now the Air Force is saying essentially what the Vietnamese scientists in Hanoi have been saying for 15 years—that dioxin equals severe health problems."

A class-action suit, which now includes some 263,000 Vietnam veterans as plaintiffs—was settled out of court with seven chemical manufacturers in 1984. But the settlement fund, now worth about \$270 million (or slightly over \$10,000 per veteran), has been held up by vets' attorneys arguing that the compensation is inadequate. Bangert believes that the new study may bring a resolution closer.

Meanwhile, a new draft study of dioxin by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) seeks to downplay previous risk assessments by sixteenfold. And on March 14, the EPA announced it will not study the

potential effects of 2,4-D—the chemical that comprised 50 percent of the Agent Orange formula—despite the likelihood that the herbicide is carcinogenic.

Although 2,4,5-T, the other component of Agent Orange, was banned for all domestic uses by the EPA in 1985, 2,4-D remains the fourth most widely used pesticide in the U.S. The National Cancer Institute found in 1986 that Kansas farmers who used 2,4-D more than 20 times a year, mixing their own formulations, were eight times more likely than normal to contract non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer of the lymph system.

A 1978 internal report by a Dow Chemical scientist noted that chemical contaminants in 2,4-D made it so toxic that farmers should not allow the herbicide to touch their skin. This report came to light last year in a Texas court, where a jury returned a \$1.5 million verdict against Dow, finding that 2,4-D had caused the malignant lymphoma that killed a U.S. Forest Service worker. It was the first judgment to link 2,4-D directly to cancer. Yet, according to agency spokesman Al Heier, the EPA maintains that animal studies "do not suggest" that 2,4-D is a carcinogen.

So when it comes to Agent Orange and its ingredients, the irony for the moment is that the Air Force—not the EPA—appears to be on the side of the victims.

—Dick Russell

Law school tenure battle heads to court

In an unprecedented action, the faculty of the City University of New York (CUNY) Law School has filed a lawsuit challenging the denial of tenure to two of its professors. Faculty and students claim that CUNY Chancellor Joseph Murphy overstepped his authority by denying the unanimous tenure recommendations of three university committees and the

Law School's dean, Haywood Burns.

The five-year-old CUNY Law School, located at Queens College, is famous for its unconventional approach to legal education. It is the only law school in the U.S. designed to produce public-interest lawyers. Many students come from backgrounds traditionally excluded by the legal profession. About 60 percent of the students are women and 40 percent are from ethnic minorities. The university's unorthodox style emphasizes legal clinics and field work rather than traditional lec-

tures and textbook study of great cases. Paul Brest, dean of the Stanford Law School, describes the CUNY program as "the most innovative and exciting experiment in legal education anywhere in the country."

The current problem began last November, when only 30 percent of the school's graduates passed the 1987 New York State bar exam. The law faculty admits that this poor showing needs to be addressed, but claims that the low scores also reflect the school's teaching philosophy of relying on clinical and simu-

lated work.

Before the scores were known, four members of the faculty and two librarians had all been unanimously recommended for tenure. But the bar exam results apparently caused university officials to panic. After the scores were released, Chancellor Murphy and Queens College President Shirley Strum Kenny overruled the tenure decisions on the basis of insufficient evidence of "teaching effectiveness." On reconsideration, Kenny then recommended that two professors, Homer La Rue and Vanessa Merton, be refused tenure. Murphy upheld her decision. Neither administrator offered any explanation.

La Rue, the first black CUNY law professor to be considered for ten-

ure, is a nationally recognized expert in labor law. Merton left New York University Law School to come to CUNY where she developed the school's Health in the Workplace Clinic, the only program in the country that offers representation to injured and disabled workers. Both are founding members of the faculty.

Supporters say the university is scapegoating the two professors to appease "traditionalists" in the legal community who object to CUNY's teaching philosophy. Daniel Greenberg, director of Harvard Law School clinical programs, accuses the university of adopting "the managerial style of George Steinbrenner." He says CUNY officials are "using the bar-exam results to destroy CUNY's

long-term goal of using law in the service of human needs."

What has been surprising is that Murphy, a self-styled progressive, has been so unyielding on the issue. He has ignored all appeals to reconsider his decision. Faculty members complain that he has failed to discuss the situation with them. But the faculty is determined to resist. Rhonda Copelon, a professor active in the current struggle, says it is a "tragedy" that the faculty is being forced into a fight over tenure. "But," says Copelon, "if we don't fight we are going to be pushed toward conforming to more traditional tenure standards. We won't be able to remain a teaching faculty."

—Ken Silverstein

The movement takes on Mayor Sawyer

CHICAGO—Black Chicagoans, still angered about the December 2 deal that made Eugene Sawyer acting mayor, delivered a stunning rebuke in the March 15 primary to the black aldermen who helped bring the old machine back to power.

The recent contests for Cook County Democratic ward committeemen provided the first opportunity to gauge voter reaction to the all-night battle in the City Council chambers last December, and the results look bad for Sawyer. Four of the six black aldermen who helped elevate Sawyer suffered defeat in Democratic committeeman races.

When a massive heart attack felled Mayor Harold Washington, Chicago's first black mayor last November 25, Alderman Timothy Evans, who had served as Washington's floor leader in the council, was the most visible spokesman for the late mayor's agenda. In the city's black communities he was the people's choice to succeed the enormously

popular Washington. But in the final tally, six of the 18 black council members joined 23 white aldermen in voting against Evans.

Most of the city's black leadership denounced the action of those six. They are now targeted for defeat by various spokesmen for the "movement" that coalesced around Washington. "Certain politicians have to understand that Harold may be dead, but his movement is still very much alive and it will bite them at the polls," said Jackie Grimshaw, one of the late mayor's closest aides and an avowed Sawyer opponent.

The March 15 committeemen races provided the first opportunity to assess Grimshaw's claim: in Chicago's peculiar one-party political culture, the Democratic committeeman's office is the political nerve center of the ward; committeemen exert more local clout than aldermen.

Ald. William Henry, perhaps the main player in Sawyer's election, lost his committeeman post to Jesse Miller, a longtime community organizer. Alds. William Beavers, Marlene Carter and Sheneather Butler, all supporters of Sawyer, were also de-

feated by Evans supporters. And the four Hispanic aldermen who backed Evans were victorious in their committeeman races.

Pundits in the mainstream press interpret the results as the first salvo in the battle between the forces of Evans and Sawyer for the mayoralty. And Sawyer's black supporters apparently accept that characterization. They've now begun demanding that the low-key acting mayor retaliate against his black political enemies.

But more seasoned organizers in the black community advise caution in casting Sawyer as an enemy and his supporters as a contending power bloc. They contend the committeeman races demonstrate a displeasure with the process that elected Sawyer, not necessarily Sawyer himself. Furthermore, it's an open secret that white Democrats are seeking a consensus candidate to challenge Sawyer, who's already announced his intention to run for mayor. And, the reasoning goes, if black voters are divided in their loyalties between Sawyer and Evans—or anyone else—it will open the way to victory for a white.

The growing white ethnic exodus to the Republican Party has increased the possibility that a strong GOP candidate could be elected mayor. Republican Cook County Sheriff James O'Grady, a former police official and Democrat, is the name bandied about most frequently when discussing this possibility. Ed Vrdolyak, Washington's arch-nemesis, is another.

The black community of this city faces an acute dilemma: should it rally behind Sawyer, because, as one precinct worker put it, "he's the only black mayor we've got"? Or should it actively work to present an attractive alternative to Sawyer and thus divide precious support between two black candidates, enhancing the chances of a strong white candidate?

As the recent elections indicated, Chicago's black voters have gained sophistication in Harold Washington's wake; the defeat of the pro-Sawyer forces was surgical in its precision. But the election also makes Washington's legacy of black empowerment seem a bit more fragile.

—Salim Muwakkil

ficer of America's largest tobacco company, tenaciously fights back, using all the vast resources at his disposal. However, Hammond's efforts are undermined at home, where a once-loving wife turns against him. Their estrangement, leading to his son's death during an attempted sabotage against Joel's company, only heightens his resolve to win the war against Morgan and his troops...." It is reported that "militant ex-smokers" are finding this novel "delightful and encouraging."

Sandinista baptism

As the U.S. was sending troops to Honduras, the American priest Roy Bourgeois was in Managua baptizing President Daniel Ortega's four-month-old daughter, Camila. According to the *National Catholic Reporter*, Ortega invited Bourgeois to Managua to baptize his daughter after the priest's eight-month stint in the Oakdale, La., federal prison for protesting U.S. Central American policy. Camila is Daniel Ortega's and poet Rosario Murillo's seventh child, and first daughter.

See, hear and speak no evil

Last tweek, in addition to sealing off Palestinian neighborhoods in the West Bank and Gaza, Israel shut down the Palestine Press Services in East Jerusalem. By closing the 10-year-old news service, Israel has denied the foreign and domestic press their only reliable source of information on the Palestinian uprisings. Reporters now need to rely on official military "media information centers" that report the activities of "incited mobs." Last February a West Bank correspondent for a leading Hebrew daily told the London *Guardian's* Ian Black, "The Palestine Press Service is generally faster and its information more detailed than the army's and it is often more precise. The army spokesman's statements have become more and more laconic and impenetrable as the trouble has continued." United Press International had been in contact with the Palestine Press Service about 10 times each day, according to Jerusalem bureau chief Louis Toscano. "I think that in terms of telling you what's going on, they're doing a hell of a lot better than the army. The army spokesman has done a miserable job of handling this entire episode so far and their reputation has been permanently damaged. They constantly tell you things are under investigation when you know damn well they're not looking into anything."

Sitting out the uprising

King Hussein of Jordan, if not actually opposed to the Palestinian demonstrations on the neighboring West Bank, "would be very relieved to see the uprising come to an end," according to David Hirst of the *Guardian* of London. Despite his "lip service" to Palestinian national aspirations, "the last thing [Hussein] is really believed to want is an independent Palestinian state." Hirst writes that Jordanian state television has manipulated coverage of the uprising. "First it presented a fairly rounded, if limited, picture of the uprising; then it began showing only the backs of Israeli soldiers; then it confined itself to still photographs with an accompanying commentary. 'Everything,' said one exasperated viewer, 'except a picture of Palestinians being spontaneous—and actually throwing stones or petrol bombs.'" A Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) official in Amman told Hirst that Jordanian demonstrations of solidarity with the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have been handily dispersed by Jordan's Public Security forces. "People are really afraid of them. They tell the people: 'You can say and do what you want in your homes but not in the streets. Otherwise we shall break your heads.' That's been enough so far. They have proved in the past how rough they can be." This Jordanian failure to support the uprising—a failure that is duplicated throughout the Arab world—could lead to a spreading of Palestinian demonstrations. Already at least six pro-Palestinian protesters have been killed in Morocco, and Kuwait has reportedly detained 250 Palestinians. A member of the Palestine National Council told Hirst: "It is not an easy thing to say at a time like this, but we know in our hearts that what the Israelis have so far done in the Occupied Territories does not compare with what some of our regimes would do if they were faced with uprisings of their own."

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Eric Omer

VA police brutality epitomizes Reagan era

By Salim Muwakkil

CHICAGO

THE STORY OF DANIEL R. WILSON, A VETERANS Administration (VA) police official, is replete with allegations of racism, brutality and suppression of dissent. Unfortunately, it's also an apt metaphor for what's gone wrong with the VA's health-care system during the Reagan era.

Focusing on Wilson—accused of brutally beating veterans—provides a glimpse into the workings of a system that, though often the subject of soaring patriotic rhetoric, is becoming yet another underfinanced public reserve for the poor and powerless. Even in the face of a growing consensus to elevate the VA to cabinet-level status in order to focus more public resources on the agency, the Reagan administration has proposed further personnel cuts in the VA facilities most utilized by the least well-off veterans.

Poor veterans were also Wilson's main targets, according to testimony stretching back nearly 10 years. Reports of his aberrant behavior first appeared in the early '80s when colleagues at the Dallas VA Medical Center, where Wilson was a detective, began complaining of his brutal and extralegal methods. Documents gathered in various subsequent investigations of the controversial police official contain—in addition to charges of brutality—accusations of racism, abuse of authority, sexual harassment and employment retaliation against those who questioned his methods.

Although he has received a reduction in rank in his new position at the VA's Lakeside Medical Center here, the controversial officer remains employed in a police capacity. Those familiar with Wilson's history express concern for those veterans exposed to his capricious brand of law enforcement. John Berter, a former co-worker of Wilson, warns he is unfit for police work. "If there's one thing I can be certain of, it's that wherever he's stationed, some poor veteran will suffer."

Black vets targetted: Berter worked with Wilson at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center from 1985 to 1987, and during that time witnessed several incidents of brutality primarily directed against poor, minority patients. In fact, in an eight-month period following Wilson's appointment as chief of police, the number of reported beatings at the facility jumped from two a year to one a month. "Wilson used to beat people constantly," Berter explains, "and most of them were black Vietnam veterans."

Berter contends he was terminated for calling attention to Wilson's abuses and he's fighting the action. The Government Accountability Project (GAP), a Washington, D.C.-based public interest group concerned with the protection of whistle-blowers, is representing him and two other whistle-blowers fired for fingering Wilson.

"For some reason, the VA seems to be protecting Wilson," explains Thomas Carpenter, Berter's GAP attorney. "Perhaps they're afraid of incurring the liability from the many beatings he administered to helpless vets."

For Carpenter, the Wilson case also exemplifies the anti-dissent mentality that pervades the Reagan administration.



Lakeside Medical Center in Chicago: critics charge one facility police officer with brutality.

Wilson in Dallas: Will Brooks, president of the Dallas-area American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and a former Wilson coworker, is convinced that Wilson keeps his job through top-level connections. "The things I've personally witnessed and written about in depositions were alone enough to have him barred forever from police work," Brooks explains.

He's reluctant to elaborate on what he's seen, he says, for fear of Wilson's friends in high places. "Suffice it to say, he has absolutely no business with police authority,"

VETERANS

Brooks says. His wariness seems a bit paranoid until he explains his knowledge of Wilson's seemingly charmed rise through the ranks. "It's really no mystery to me. If he doesn't have highly placed protectors, how else can you explain a man with his scandal-ridden record holding such a responsible job as police work in the VA system?" Brooks asks.

Brooks' question gains resonance when considering Wilson's record after departing from Dallas. He became chief of police at the Cincinnati facility in February 1985—"I was astounded to discover he was named chief after leaving Dallas," says Brooks. "There was nothing in his files that qualified him for that job." By November of that year Berter and three other officers were trying to alert authorities to Wilson's brutal excesses.

"At first, there were small indications that he routinely abused his powers. For example, when we made drug arrests, he would advise us to keep some of the drugs so that we could later plant them on people we wanted to accuse," Berter says. But within two months of Wilson's appointment, Berter saw more violent examples of abuse.

"I saw him kick people in the groin. And in one case, involving a man named Charles

Hummons, he actually stood on the man's testicles after knocking him down with a kick to the groin. I've seen him choke, club, twist limbs and verbally abuse several patients," Berter explains. In all but one case, he notes, the victims were black.

"I had been working at the medical center for about five and a half years before Wilson came in as chief, and at first I admired his enthusiasm," Berter says. But Berter soon changed his mind. "I saw him do some extremely brutal things to people, and I knew I had to do something before somebody got killed."

Berter's concerns were echoed by three other officers at the Cincinnati facility, and together they initiated an anonymous letter-writing campaign. "To be frank, we were a bit afraid of putting our heads on the chopping block because we knew of Wilson's violently vindictive nature," says Berter. "He also gave us the impression that he could do anything and get away with it. But we couldn't just watch this madman continue to brutalize people with impunity. We thought sending anonymous letters would call attention to Wilson's abuses without endangering our livelihoods."

Crushing dissent: Berter was wrong. Although they mailed more than 100 letters to the FBI, VA administration, prominent journalists and congressional leaders, he and two of the others involved in the letter-writing scheme—David Headley and Harold Hipple—were eventually fired.

Both Hipple and Headley appealed their termination to the federal Merit Systems Protection Board and received monetary settlements and clean employment records. But at the same time they were prohibited from testifying about the alleged incidents of brutality involving Wilson. Berter turned to GAP after meeting opposition from the merit board's Office of Special Counsel (OSC), the federal agency created to protect federally em-

ployed whistle-blowers from retaliation.

"I thought the OSC was there to help protect me, but instead it treated me like a suspect," Berter explains. "I was one investigated by the OSC." Moreover, according to Carpenter, the OSC disregarded the sworn affidavits of 12 alleged victims of Wilson because they were written by drug addicts, mental incompetents and felons whose testimonies, it claimed, would face rigorous court challenges.

Carpenter doesn't dispute the negative characterization of the alleged victims. Indeed, he says, "that's why many of these people—a good number of whom are black Vietnam veterans—are at the VA hospital; they need help. What they got instead was beatings. There's no doubt that Wilson knew who to pick on. But now their accounts of his brutality are deemed unreliable because they are powerless and poor."

The Justice Department recently completed a year-long FBI investigation into the brutality charges against Wilson. It concluded that the evidence, which included 18 incidents and 24 sworn affidavits, did not warrant prosecution. However, the evidence has never been made public and some Congress members who have seen it think the Justice Department made the wrong decision.

During the Senate hearings on whistle-blower protections last summer Sen. David Pryor (D-AR), chairman of the Subcommittee on Federal Services, Postal Office and Civil Service, said, "There is nothing in this report that exonerates officer Wilson." A staff briefing prepared for the House Subcommittee on Civil Service, chaired by Patricia Schroeder (D-CO), reveals that FBI investigator Mike McDaniels recommended the department prosecute Wilson.

All attempts to contact Wilson at the Chicago facility proved fruitless. Officials at the medical center refer questions about the matter to the OSC.

Meese again: There is a strong inference that the FBI killed the investigation at the suggestion of top-level VA officials, Carpenter contends. A story in the February 19 edition of the *Veteran*, a Washington-based publication that focuses on veteran-related issues, adds an element of credence to Carpenter's suspicions.

"It is anyone's guess why the Justice Department ignored McDaniels' recommendation to bring criminal charges against Wilson," the newspaper read, "but internal documents suggest that VA meddling had much to do with it."

The *Veteran* also reported that an internal VA memo suggested that VA administrator Thomas K. Turnage exploited his close friendship with Attorney General Edwin Meese to help terminate the FBI investigation. According to the *Veteran*, the memo reads, in part "...Perhaps a personal phone call would provide us with additional insights and information" on the FBI investigation.

Two months later, the paper reported, another internal VA memo urged the FBI efforts be subverted. "It is our belief that nine months should be sufficient for the FBI to conclude its investigation and [we] recommend that the administrator make the appropriate contacts at the Department of Justice to facilitate an end to the FBI's investigative activities," the memo read. Within three months the investigation was terminated.

This kind of collusion to repress dissent

Continued on page 22

By Tim Vanderpool

PHOENIX

AS THE ADMINISTRATION OF ARIZONA'S Gov. Evan Mecham comes under increased scrutiny during his impeachment trial in the state Senate, those right-wing activists long comprising his staunchest base of support are becoming increasingly radical. Carrying signs reading "We Love the Guv" and "Kangaroo Court," they've become a fixture on the steps of the capitol in downtown Phoenix.

Such protests are the culmination of a controversial first year in office for the governor. Mecham was indicted by a state grand jury in January for campaign-contribution irregularities. The indictment led to his eventual impeachment by the Arizona House of Representatives in February. He is now undergoing an impeachment trial in the state Senate. Meanwhile, the governor also is up against a recall election May 17, initiated by opponents of his cancellation of the state's Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

As *In These Times* went to press, state senators were entering their sixth week of deliberation. For investigating the governor they've become the targets of death threats, and Mecham supporters have targetted no fewer than 10 legislators for removal from office by recall—the same tactic being used by Mecham opponents to oust the governor.

Through it all, the governor maintains that he is a victim, an intolerable thorn in the side of Arizona's power elite. The Phoenix 40, an influential business group, is a common scapegoat as is the media, both national and local. To his paranoid followers, the governor's views have become gospel. Mecham's philosophical roots lie with those who consider themselves disenfranchised from mainstream state politics.

A bad egg for breakfast: It was in fact the Arizona Breakfast Club, a far-right conglomeration of conspiracy-oriented "outsiders," who first drafted Mecham for governor in 1986. To them Mecham represented a leader who could do battle with the mystical Trilateral Commission, the communist-inspired liberals and misguided gays. It was Mecham who could return a respect of traditional moral values to the state of Arizona.

Mecham, at the time an auto dealer, defeated Burton Barr, the Senate majority leader, in the Republican primary. Then he was able to gain the governorship in a three-way contest, getting only 40 percent of the vote. Since his election, he has become one of the most controversial politicians in America, partly because of his propensity to use racial slurs. Not only has he lost much of his statewide support, but he helped alienate the media by barring a reporter from gubernatorial press conferences on the grounds that the journalist was a "non-person."

Still, his friends on the radical right remain faithful. Though Mecham stands accused in the Senate of attempting to obstruct justice, failing to record campaign loans and using state funds for personal purposes, his support in the state remains at a constant 27 percent of the electorate. These are the people who, when polled, say they will support the governor no matter what truths are laid bare in the Senate.

Acknowledging this blind trust, Mecham has taken several occasions to visit Breakfast Club meetings, reassuring members he has not gone soft. In a speech delivered to the club just days after his inauguration, the governor confirmed the members' worst fears, describing the shock he felt upon entering

Facing impeachment, Gov. Mecham looks to his friends on the far right



ARIZONA

Arizona Gov. Evan Mecham insists that he is a victim of the state's power elite and the media.

office. "I got a surprise when I got down there," he said. "It's worse than I thought."

He went on to espouse his Armageddon world-view, that "I think we all realize we're in the last days." Mecham then labelled former Gov. Bruce Babbitt "a liar by profession," and warned against "tyrants who pander to minorities," an obvious reference to Babbitt's endorsement of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday that Mecham cancelled.

Going a step further, Mecham urged Jesse Jackson to change his tactics. "I'm afraid he's going to hurt the blacks," he said, "because if he keeps pushing [the Martin Luther King holiday]...there will come a time when the majority will stand up and say, 'We're not going to take it anymore.' And I fear what will happen then—I don't want to see that happen to the blacks."

His ultra-conservative credentials thus intact, Mecham then spent part of the next week addressing a meeting of the John Birch Society in Washington state, reiterating his

predictions of world doom and race war.

The "liberal conspiracy": Like his allies, the governor also continues to deride the media as a puppet of the "liberal conspiracy." John Hufault, acting director of the Tucson branch of the Breakfast Club,

To his paranoid followers, the governor's views have become gospel. Mecham's philosophical roots lie with those who consider themselves disenfranchised from mainstream politics.

explained: "Basically, he is a constitutionalist, and that's why he gets into trouble." Hufault said the media intentionally distorts Mecham's views. "Next thing you know, he's a racist, he's anti-this and anti-that."

It's one of many ironies surrounding the governor that he has recently begun cloaking his fight in the robes of the U.S. Constitution. Remarking several times that his rights are being violated by the Senate impeachment trial, he says that any elected official can be removed from office "without any real evidence."

To show support for the embattled governor, 4,000 devotees gathered on the Arizona State University campus in February to raise funds for his defense. Speaking to the crowd was Donald Sills, chairman of the Washington, D.C.-based Coalition for Religious Freedom.

In his address, Sills attacked Ed Buck, founder of the recall movement and an open homosexual. "According to Mr. Buck, when Mecham is out of office, the whole state will be gay," he said. "Never have sodomites done anything for the good of our nation," Sills continued, adding that "homosexuals are responsible for the most hideous disease in the history of mankind."

This message apparently struck home: the rally succeeded in raising more than \$100,000 for the governor's legal costs.

Someone may have decided to take the governor's cause further. Just hours after Mecham was indicted by a state grand jury in January, an arsonist set fire to the Phoenix offices of special House counsel William French. Files pertaining to the case were elsewhere at the time, but damage was estimated at \$20,000. No one has yet been arrested in the incident.

The American way of strife: Whether such violence will become more common as the trial continues remains a topic for speculation. What's certain is that Mecham continues fanning the fires of the far right. After his impeachment in the House, Mecham stumped the state, urging supporters to put pressure on those lawmakers who oppose him. He also continues to elevate his struggle, raising it from that of a besieged politician to one of preserving the American way of life. In doing so, he has become a martyr for the reactionary right, a tireless crusader for a sacred cause.

Whether or not the Senate convicts Mecham, the flame of bitterness will certainly continue to burn bright throughout Arizona. Citizens of the state are growing increasingly polarized in their views. Horrified by the governor's stance, moderate Republicans are leaving the Mecham fold by the score. Democrats, on the other hand, are eager to avoid appearing like a lynch mob, and are treading somewhat lightly around the governor.

For his part, Evan Mecham appears convinced of his impending victory. Such confidence may be misplaced, however. If the Senate follows through in its task, the "last days" that the Armageddon-obsessed governor so fondly envisions may turn out to be his own as governor of Arizona. □

Tim Vanderpool is a regular contributor to the *Tucson Weekly*.

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By Kevin Kelly

DALLAS

DIANE RAGSDALE WAS ANGRY. ONE OF THE two blacks on the Dallas City Council, she told the 500 people attending the March 27 rally that civil rights in the city were under attack. "Jobs, justice and housing don't drop from the sky. It takes hard, consistent work," she said.

People pushed forward to form neighborhood committees as the crowd sang "We Shall Overcome." By day's end a multi-ethnic committee had formed to counter a rollback of recently passed police reforms.

The rally put white Dallas on notice: blacks are going to fight. Faced with what may be the greatest assault on their civil rights since the '70s, blacks and their liberal white allies in this city are furiously organizing. In so doing, they are claiming their rights and extending grass-roots democracy here as never before.

Democracy is still new to this city, arriving in 1978, when federal courts ordered Dallas to replace its at-large election system with district contests. For the first time black grievances would be aired at City Hall.

Until then, Dallas had been run like a corporation—or so city leaders liked to boast. Guided by a shadowy business group called the Dallas Citizens Council, the city won a reputation as a can-do, business-first town. With more than a little pride, residents pointed out that Dallas was the nation's largest city manager-run metropolis. No politics here. The at-large elected city council was virtually handpicked by the city's business mavens.

When it came to zoning, bond issues or race relations, Dallas exalted the needs of business. In race relations this pattern dated to the '30s, when the city's art deco Fair Park was built. After city leaders out-hustled other cities to host the 1936 Texas centennial fair, they began burnishing the neighborhood around Fair Park. While doing so, workers stumbled upon a pocket of black residents. The city renamed one street Congo, say many, to alert white fair-goers about the area's residents.

An accommodation: If segregation was a calculated business decision, so was desegregation. When other Southern cities like Little Rock and Birmingham suffered racial strife in the early '60s, the Citizens Council met and agreed that racial violence was bad for business. Almost overnight the "colored" signs disappeared from public toilets, lunch counters and buses. In return black ministers counseled restraint; the civil rights movement was ignored in Dallas.

But the accommodation didn't end racial tensions. It only delayed them by denying the city's black community stature and leadership and by leaving in place a rigorous system of economic segregation.

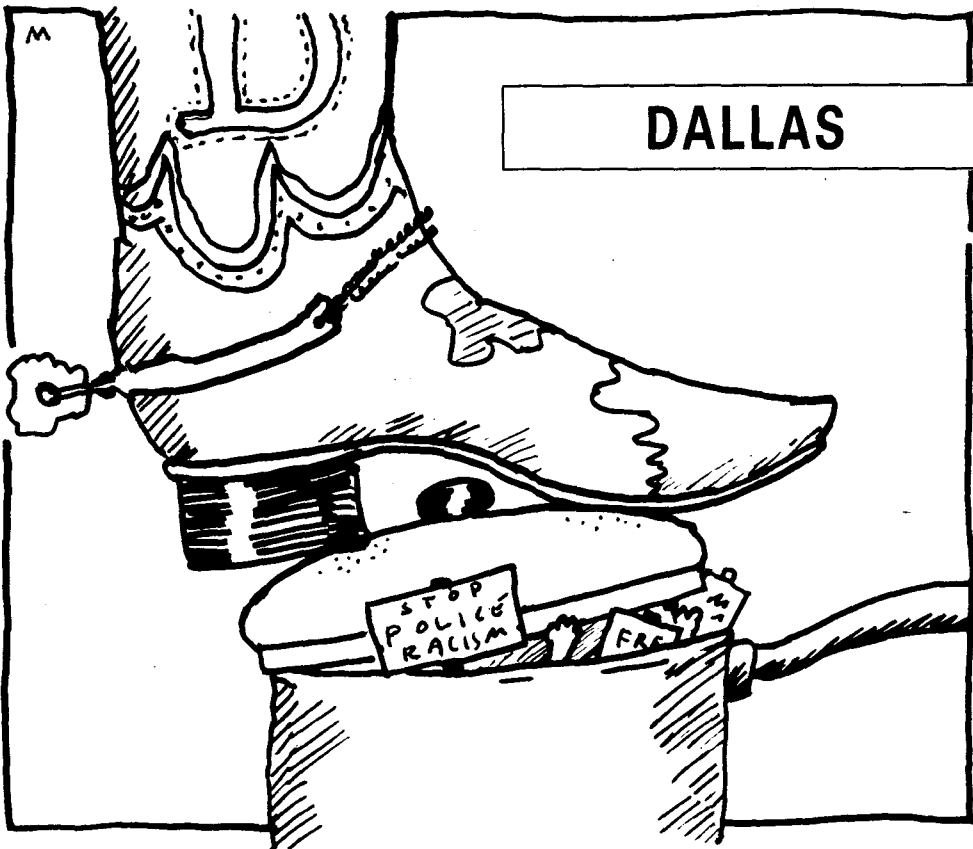
But all that may be changing. Rev. C.C. McNeeley, a prominent minister in the '60s, urges his parishioners to be patient, but he also warns: "1988 is probably going to be the year we wish had never come."

As in other U.S. cities, economic and social problems have heated race relations. But in Dallas, political conflict centered around the police force has for the first time heated those tensions to a flash point.

The latest incident occurred in late January, when a homeless, mentally-ill black man gunned down a white police officer in downtown Dallas. Some witnesses claim black bystanders goaded the assailant on by chanting "Shoot him, shoot him," while others dispute this claim. Racial tensions have spiraled

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Police conflict is at center of rising racial tensions



ever since.

In the days after the shooting, the conservative police chief, "Billy" Prince, blamed the murder on City Council criticisms of his force. The 11-member council, which has two black members had pushed through police reforms that included an affirmative-action hiring program. Much of the impetus for reform came from the black community in 1986, when the Dallas police led the country in killings. In one incident police shot an elderly black woman who had called in a burglary report.

But white Dallas responded to Prince's message. Thousands of whites attended demonstrations organized by a new pro-police group called Citizens Offering Police Support. At rallies, speakers condemned the police reforms and the city's few black leaders. "Back the Blue" bumper stickers became ubiquitous in the white suburbs. Sensing a moment to seize, the Ku Klux Klan and a group of skinheads marched on City Hall.

Councilwoman Diane Ragsdale, one of two blacks on the council, says she received more than 400 obscene phone calls and threats on her life. In a separate set of rallies, blacks condemned Prince and demanded his ouster. Even establishment blacks seethed. "This city is poised for riots," said Comer Cottrell, a prominent black businessman and president of Proline Inc., a \$35-million hair-care company. "The police are just the visible part of the problem."

Behind the tensions: The black community is suffering its worst economic crunch in years. The black neighborhoods of east and south Dallas didn't gain much from the

economic boom, and they've suffered disproportionately in the ongoing recession here. Community activists say joblessness in south Dallas runs as high as 20 percent, compared to 7.3 percent for the city as a whole. The median income for a black family in south Dallas is \$9,000. A recent study by the Dallas Alliance, a local civic group, found that 21 percent of the city's black families live in poverty—compared with 4 percent of white families.

In addition, the crime rate in south Dallas has soared 44 percent over the last three years, partly because Jamaican gangs armed with automatic weapons are taking over the drug trade. Dallas is now the second most crime-ridden city in the U.S., according to Federal Bureau of Investigation statistics. Again, the Alliance report describes vastly different living conditions for Dallas residents. White Dallas suffers from property crimes, while black Dallas has violent crimes. The economy figures heavily in black crimes.

"Listen, you can make \$300 a week dealing coke," says one teen-ager. "With that kind of money it's easy to recruit people who have no jobs."

The jobless begin lining up early on Monday mornings at the employment office at the Martin Luther King Community Center. Their anger is palpable. "I don't want to talk to you unless you got a job for me," says one.

But it's the growing nihilism of the young that frightens the activists. "You have a whole generation of blacks," says Southern Christian Leadership Conference Regional Director Peter Johnson, "who don't care

about living or dying, killing or being killed. Dallas has just beat it out of them."

Around the corner from Congo Street, young men gather in front of the barber shop. Many drink wine from bottles wrapped in paper bags. Like many of the area's houses, the barber shop lost its paint years ago and the floor has since buckled.

"Dallas is hard," says one man.

His friend interrupts, shouting: "I can't tell you nothin' 'bout Dallas, man. I had a job cleanin' the streets, then winter comes and I can't work. I can't eat. I go lookin' for work and come home and everything is stolen. That's Dallas. It's crime, it's rape, it's murder."

White flight: Like many other U.S. cities, Dallas has had its share of white flight. Since 1970 the black population has grown nearly 25 percent while 53,000 whites have moved out. Today some 262,000 blacks—almost one-third of the city's population—crowd into south and east Dallas. But the jobs and economic growth lie miles north in the new white suburbs, where many corporations have moved to escape high downtown rents. Councilwoman Ragsdale surveyed one south Dallas neighborhood and counted more than 400 liquor and convenient stores, but no banks or major businesses.

Many inner-city neighborhoods are equally blighted, but few are as disenfranchised as black Dallas. Until 1983 the city's inadequate bus system deterred blacks from travelling north to where jobs are located. Even today blacks commuting to north Dallas can pay more than \$500 a year in travel costs.

In the early '80s the city tried to create a non-profit agency to loan money for small businesses in south Dallas. But the effort collapsed when private groups did not match the funds made available by the city.

Much of the current white backlash can be attributed to a new reform movement at City Hall that was spearheaded by a coalition of liberal and black activists. Already the city has set up a job-skills training center and started a development fund through which the Fair Park neighborhood gets 10 cents from every outdoor concert ticket sold at the park. Mayor Annette Strauss has also formed a committee called Dallas Together to examine race relations.

But black leaders remain skeptical. "We want jobs. We're tired of dialogue," says Councilwoman Ragsdale.

White Dallas is still looking for a new white knight. Appeals for an end to divisiveness and "strong leadership" pepper newspaper editorials and common conversation. The Citizens Council, hurt by business failures, can provide little leadership. Billionaire H. Ross Perot has become the new white hope. He is helping the Dallas Police Association launch a referendum to undo some of the police reforms, such as a citizens review board that examines any case in which an officer uses deadly force. He has also suggested putting a fence around south Dallas and unleashing the police to perform house-to-house searches.

So there is little hope that racial tensions will soon abate here. Activists quietly worry that the next police incident will provoke riots. Moreover, white Dallas seems bewildered by the black voices democracy has unsilenced, and in their search for a new savior they signal their unease with the new order.

"We have to tell the white community that racial tensions are bad for business," says black County Commissioner John Wiley Price. "But will they listen?"

Kevin Kelly is a Dallas-based journalist.

"This city is poised for riots," said prominent black businessman Comer Cottrell. Added Rev. C.C. McNeeley, "1988 is probably going to be the year we wish had never come."

French Socialists' 'disarmament' means all but France disarm

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

QUESTION: WHEN IT COMES TO THE DISARMAMENT issue, how can you tell a French Socialist from a French right-winger? Answer: The French Socialist thinks it's all right for the superpowers to disarm, so long as they don't expect France to do the same. The right-wingers don't want anybody to disarm.

This basically sums up the right-left cleavage at a recent Paris symposium on "defense in the year 2000" sponsored by *Espaces 89*, a five-year-old Socialist club founded by senior officials, members of cabinet ministers' staffs or heads of nationalized industries. *Espaces 89* praises the Socialist Party primarily for having had the courage while in office between 1981 and 1986 to carry out "a veritable cultural revolution that rehabilitated free enterprise among the people of the left." With 500 members, branches in the provinces and "antennae" in the prestigious *grandes écoles*, *Espaces 89* calls itself "the most important of the left clubs."

Perhaps. But it has competition from, among others, the new *Club Condorcet*, the older *Club Mendes-France*, *Démocratie 2000*, *Droit et Démocratie*, *La Mémoire Courte* and the *Fondation Saint Simon*—not to mention the oldest and most influential of them all, the *Masonic Grand Orient de France*. The proliferation of political clubs signals the decay of the Socialist Party that was revived in 1971 to unite the left, and is a throwback to the traditional, elitist-style politics.

Espaces 89 was founded in 1981 out of awareness that the Socialist Party could not stake its future on coalition with the Communist Party—a partner that was unreliable and declining rapidly. Thus the Socialist Party needed to "broaden" its "discourse" toward the parties of the center and the right. *Espaces 89* promoted the idea, now fully accepted by Socialist leaders, of organizing a broad "presidential majority" around François Mitterrand.

As the defense symposium illustrated, such clubs are places where the political class can shape a consensus, without being disturbed by outsiders. Leading representatives of the right-wing parties are invited to

debates. The Socialists are clearly not motivated to exaggerate disagreements at a time when their hope of getting back into government now depends on consent from at least part of the right.

There were laments from all sides at the *Espaces 89* symposium on defense and disarmament over the slowness of building the much-discussed "European pillar" of NATO and of France's failure to revive the Western

ARMS CONTROL

European Union as the basis for such a pillar—a failure attributed largely to the British preference for trans-Atlantic ties. Speakers grappled with the dilemmas currently causing anguish in the French military establishment. How can France combat German tendencies toward nuclear disarmament and keep the French nuclear arsenal out of future disarmament negotiations?

The background to the discussion was the March 3 NATO summit meeting in Brussels that France's president and prime minister attended for the first time since de Gaulle took France out of NATO's integrated military command more than 20 years ago. The main thing that happened at that meeting was nothing: the U.S. gave in to West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's earnest pleas not to force the issue of "modernization" of short-range nuclear weapons at a time when his countrymen overwhelmingly want to negotiate with the Soviets for their removal. This was a tactical retreat, in order to fight and win another day. None of the NATOcrats are giving up the prospect of a new generation of tactical nuclear weapons.

In praise of concepts: Trying to balance between NATO demands and their own interests, German leaders have come up with the need to define a new "concept" of defense for NATO. The Germans want to define a coherent purpose for NATO, so that they can accept or refuse weapons systems according to a clear criterion. This suggestion sounds weird to a lot of Pentagon regulars. Who needs a "concept"?

The French, however, think they are good at things like concepts, and some of them see in the German demand a new opportu-

nity to get in there and "anchor Germany to the West"—that is, to the French arms procurement budget. In particular, the school of thought that can be described as "left Gaullist" is positively delighted to see the Germans criticizing the American "flexible response" doctrine. The French like to debate doctrines even more than concepts and are proud to note that France invented its very own nuclear defense doctrine, laid down for all time by Gen. de Gaulle, "the deterrence of the strong by the weak."

This is a small power adaptation of the "massive retaliation" doctrine of the U.S. in the '50s, before Soviet nuclear parity persuaded Pentagon strategists to try something less instantly apocalyptic. The result was the more ambiguous "flexible response," a step by step escalation to the Apocalypse.

None of these doctrines can bear much systematic analysis. But their ultimate absurdity is always dismissed by the observation that their only purpose is to deter nuclear war, and therefore so long as we are not being destroyed in a nuclear holocaust,

Socialists are clearly not motivated to exaggerate disagreements with conservatives, because their hope of getting back into government depends on consent from at least part of the right.

the dominant doctrine, whatever it is, must be working.

On the occasion of his NATO coming-out at the Brussels summit, Mitterrand recalled France's total opposition to "flexible response." The traditional French interpretation of "flexible response" is that it shows U.S. unwillingness to risk Soviet reprisals against American territory. The French logical conclusion is that a nation will risk annihilation only to defend itself, and that France (and by implication everybody else) must have nuclear weapons of its own in order to be protected by a strategic deterrent.

Mitterrand's Elysee advisers explained the president's criticism of NATO strategy by the need to counter doctrinal confusion caused by Defense Minister André Giraud's increasingly emphatic support for "flexible response" and the tactical nuclear weapons that it may entail. Giraud gives priority to fitting French doctrine, practice and arms contracts into the overall NATO context.

Looking to France: Yet another reason was to display sympathy for Kohl's reluctance to take on modernized short-range missiles, just as Mitterrand in 1983 displayed support for Kohl's decision to accept the intermediate-range Pershing 2 and cruise missiles. Beyond that, there may be the glimmer of left-wing Gaullist hopes: perhaps Germans' disillusion with American strategic doctrine will be an occasion for them to turn to the French strategic doctrine instead. Diplomatic correspondent Paul-Marie de la Gorce, for instance, stressed that there are "two strategies in Europe," NATO's and France's, and never the twain shall meet. He said he found growing German criticism of

NATO strategy interesting.

Closer to NATO and the conservatives, analyst Pierre Lellouche emphasized that, no matter who wins the French presidential election in May, "the first problem of the next president will be the link between France and NATO."

Socialist member of parliament Gérard Fuchs pointed to another looming problem. As soon as the Reagan-Gorbachov intermediary nuclear forces (INF) treaty is ratified in June, the Soviet Union will start making new disarmament proposals, including an offer to scrap short-range nuclear weapons. To forestall the danger of denuclearization, Fuchs was ready to go quite far: "Let's propose major advances in conventional and chemical disarmament."

But not even he suggested that such proposals would be more than efforts to woo Western public opinion away from the siren song of denuclearization. France is embarked on a brand new chemical weapons program and is currently playing a leading role in blocking a worldwide chemical weapons ban at Geneva negotiations.

Yet various speakers, including a close Mitterrand adviser, agreed that when it came to the disarmament process initiated by Reagan and Gorbachov, "France has no significant contribution to make."

In contrast to most of the men, the one woman speaker, Socialist Gisèle Charzat, was optimistic about France's "central role" in Europe and the world. The "Mitterrand generation," she proclaimed, welcomed the Reagan-Gorbachov Washington treaty, but it is "not a generation of missionaries" and perceives the limit of disarmament. Star Wars will go on for the next 50 years, introducing new high-tech weapons. Not only soldiers, but all French people should be concerned with defense, notably students and researchers, she said, calling for a vast research program.

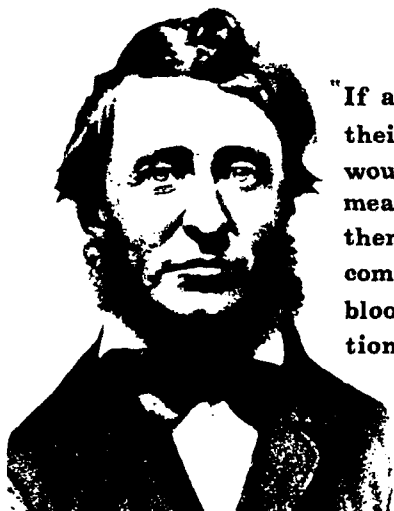
The star of the evening was the former leader of the Socialist left, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, who now has a club of his own, *République Moderne*. Chevènement said little, as befits a man who may aspire to be France's next defense minister and thus seeks a moderately optimistic consensus position. Chevènement said he supported maintaining nuclear deterrence and 4 percent GNP defense spending.

At the end of the symposium, a naive youth arose from the audience to ask a question. He had come from out of town, he explained, to hear Socialists discuss the topic billed as "disarmament." Perhaps he was mistaken, but he had thought disarmament meant doing something about all those weapons that are sold by France to countries like Iraq and that kill people every day.

A leading Socialist answers, "We are all sensitive to your moral concerns." But, he explained, there is "moral logic and also industrial logic." He reassured the idealist that the two logics might soon get together, thanks to rising weapons production costs. In 10 years, he predicted, France will no longer sell arms directly to Third World countries. Instead, "most of our arms exports will go through Europe" as joint European ventures.

Except for the anonymous youth with the Socialist conscience, everyone else had discussed "disarmament" primarily as one of the problems confronting preservation of French nuclear forces. □

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"If a thousand...were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be a violent and bloody measure, as it would be to pay them, and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is, in fact, the definition of a peaceable revolution."

Henry David Thoreau

"On Resistance to Civil Government"; 1849

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LARGEST U.S. FUND OF RESISTED WAR TAXES

By Kevin Robinson

GUATEMALA CITY

ALTHOUGH MANY OBSERVERS THINK THE incidents along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border in mid-March helped bring about a Sandinista-contra cease-fire, the border crisis threw a wrench in the Central American peace process as a whole. The regional foreign ministers conference here March 23-24 ended in failure because of disagreements between Honduras and Nicaragua.

A new ministers' conference is set for April 7, but it seems unlikely that the Arias peace plan for Central America will recover its original momentum throughout the region.

Most regional diplomats now candidly admit that the pact achieved its original goal of replacing military pressure on Nicaragua with political pressure. But the international attention on the Nicaraguan situation helped marginalize the peace pact's application in the other Central American countries still plagued by bloody insurgencies and human rights abuses.

Nonetheless, the Sandinistas' tenacious attempts to reach a cease-fire in Nicaragua—plus growing pressure from opposition groups in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala—could still push those countries to revive internal peace processes.

All's quiet on the negotiating front: At the last conference of Central American presidents in Costa Rica in January, the regional leaders designated their foreign ministers to draw up new methods for verification and supervision of the peace pact's application in all of the countries. Originally, the Contadora Group countries—Mexico, Panama, Colombia and Venezuela—together with the secretary-generals of the United Nations and of the Organization of American States (OAS) headed the verification procedures. But their strongly critical evaluations—especially of human rights abuses in some of the countries—angered most of the regional governments, and the foreign ministers took over as the "Executive Commission" in charge of verification and supervision (see accompanying story).

At the commission's meeting March 23-24, the foreign ministers intended to evaluate the pact's progress in each country and draw up new methods for "on-site" verification of the accords. They also planned to name the countries from outside the region that will participate in verification processes, possibly including Canada and some European nations.

But the border crisis eclipsed that agenda. After some 14 hours of grueling debate over the border incidents, the foreign ministers failed to reach agreement. They suspended the meeting until April 7 in Guatemala City.

Nicaragua, which says the Honduran government's failure to expel contra troops from Honduran territory caused the crisis, reinstated its demand before the International Court of Justice at The Hague to force Honduras to close down contra camps. That demand had been in abeyance since the signing of the regional peace pact last August. The agreement calls on countries to end aid to insurgents and exclude the rebels from their territories.

"The recent incidents with Nicaragua buried our original agenda," said Honduran Foreign Minister Carlos Lopez. "By reviving its demand at The Hague, Nicaragua is placing the Executive Commission's responsibilities in the hands of other international organizations, thereby derailing the Esquipulas peace process."

Despite Nicaragua accord, regional peace in trouble



But after the U.S. Marines landed in Honduras in mid-March, Nicaragua lost faith in Honduras' willingness to comply with the peace agreement. "Honduras is a country occupied politically and militarily by the U.S.," charged Miguel D'Escoto, Nicaragua's foreign minister. "Calling on the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division was also outside the peace pact negotiations, and it was only after Honduras called on U.S. troops that we approached The Hague to request protective measures."

The two countries may well reconcile by the April 7 ministers' meeting, but even after the Executive Commission names new nations to participate in peace-pact verification, it should take at least six to eight months before adequate verification procedures are finally drawn, and even longer to put into practice, according to Canadian diplomats here.

No peace here: In the meantime, the peace pact's application in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala appears stalled. In all three nations, human rights violations continue unabated. And the civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala have severely intensified since last year.

In El Salvador, since negotiations between the government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) ended in October, fighting has increased around the

The pact's application in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala appears stalled. Human rights violations continue unabated. And the civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala have severely intensified.

country. Although guerrilla estimates are much higher, the Salvadoran armed forces admit that more than 3,000 soldiers were either injured or killed in almost 3,000 battles with the FMLN throughout 1987.

In January, the Salvadoran army launched "Operation Fenix 14," a vast counterinsurgency campaign throughout the nation

employing about 45,000 of the armed forces' 55,000 recruits. The FMLN, on the other hand, began a major offensive—primarily against economic targets—in an effort to avert municipal and congressional elections on March 20. The rebels consider such votes part of the government's counterinsurgency

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strategy, aimed at discrediting the guerrillas.

In Guatemala, following last October's government-rebel talks—the first since the guerrilla struggle began in the '60s—the army launched its largest counterinsurgency operations in at least four years. The measures were aimed at wiping out the guerrillas' traditional mountain strongholds. Heavy air bombardment in November in the northern Quiché province—a conflict area along the Mexican border—forced some 1,000 peasants to flee their villages to seek church protection, according to church officials. Similar air attacks took place in other regions.

The Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) reports an average of between two and three battles a day with the army since January, and the government now adamantly rejects any new talks with the URNG unless the rebels agree to put down their arms and join legal political activities.

Hope for the future? Despite the virtual disappearance of peace processes in those countries, however, international attention is almost exclusively focused on Nicaragua, where the government's efforts to comply with peace accords led to a cease-fire last week.

Regional diplomats here say the emphasis on Nicaragua reflects the Arias plan's original goal of applying international pressure on the Sandinistas. "With the U.S. Congress' rejection of new aid to the contras, the Es-

quipulas peace process successfully replaced military pressure with political pressure on Nicaragua," Roberto Alejos, a member of Guatemala's congressional foreign relations commission, told *In These Times*. "The added focus on Nicaragua is a natural development, since Nicaragua must permit greater political reforms than the other countries."

Paradoxically, however, the Sandinistas' broad efforts to negotiate an end to the contra war and strengthen political pluralism in Nicaragua may bring greater pressure on the other countries to restart similar processes.

"The Sandinistas' successful negotiations with RN sets an example for the other Central American governments and increases the pressure on them," Paul Reichler, a U.S. attorney who advised the Sandinistas during negotiations with the contras, told *In These Times*. "If the Sandinistas can reach a cease-fire with the contras, then the Salvadoran government can do the same with the FMLN."

But the decisive pressure may come from internal opposition groups in the other countries.

In El Salvador, an increasingly militant and powerful union movement continues to push the government to negotiate an end to the war. And in Honduras, broad national groups—including opposition members of congress—are demanding the expulsion of the contras, as well as an end to human rights violations.

In Guatemala, for the first time, the Catholic Church and opposition political parties plan to meet with the URNG to evaluate methods for reopening peace talks with the government. An extensive new front for unions and grass-roots organizations is demanding government measures to force respect for human rights.

"One of the peace plan's virtues is that it opened new, broad channels for dialogue in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala," said Melvin Saenz, a high-level adviser in the Costa Rican foreign ministry. "Through those channels, political and diplomatic negotiations are kept alive and present an alternative for resolving national problems." □

Kevin Robinson is *In These Times'* correspondent in Guatemala.

Peace pact doesn't stop human rights abuses

In its final evaluation of the Central American peace pact's progress in January, the Arias plan's International Verification and Supervision Commission (CIVS) severely criticized the continuation of human rights violations in all of the region's countries.

For example, CIVS criticized Nicaragua for impeding civil liberties through its now-repealed state-of-emergency decree. The commission even accused security forces in Costa Rica, traditionally considered a "democratic haven" in Latin America, of hundreds of "arbitrary arrests" in recent years, many for political reasons.

But the commission directed its harshest criticisms against Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, where, it concluded, democratic processes "are limited... through abuses by authorities, security forces and paramilitary groups." CIVS accused the military in all three countries of kidnappings and assassinations, and said death squads remain active in El Salvador and Guatemala.

Indeed, following a wave of Salvadoran kidnappings and assassinations in February, church officials denounced an increase in death-squad activity, directly

blaming the army for the torture and murder of peasants in some case (see *In These Times*, Feb. 24).

Despite Guatemala's return to civilian rule in 1986, 550 people were assassinated and 150 more kidnapped last year, according to local independent counts. Those figures show virtually no change from the 706 cases of kidnappings and murders reported under the military regime in 1985.

The Costa Rican-based Organization of American States' Inter-American Human Rights Court opened its first proceedings against the Honduran government for the alleged kidnapping of four people from 1980-81. The trial provoked the assassinations of two key witnesses in January, leading to harsh international condemnation (see *In These Times*, Jan. 20). The European Economic Community, for example, which expects a greater role in the peace process through economic aid programs, declared its "profound concern" for rights violations in Honduras, imploring the government to "enforce respect for human rights... and political freedom as stipulated in the Esquipulas accords."

—K.R.

By Rick Wilson
Translated by Pamela Ward

"It is not a question of destroying the values of the October Revolution. Rather we must restore and purify them; they must be reinforced and built upon. Only if there is a systematic and consistent democratization of the whole of our political and social life on a socialist basis will our country be able to regain its role and influence among the progressive forces of the world."

MIKHAIL GORBACHOV EXPOUNDING HIS ideas of *glasnost* and *perestroika*? No. Roy A. Medvedev in the early '70s—during the long, cold winter of the Brezhnev era. Yet, while Medvedev's writings are well known in scholarly and democratic socialist circles around the world, he is no darling of the Western media. Neither rabidly anti-socialist like Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, nor a moderate liberal like Andrei Sakharov, Medvedev is a critical but loyal Soviet citizen, a Marxist and a socialist—even, with certain qualifications, a Leninist and a communist. In short, a democratic-sounding communist who tends to cause indigestion among corporate journalists.

Although he has often seemed a voice crying in the wilderness, Medvedev has lived in the thick of Soviet history. He and his twin brother Zhores, also a prominent author and dissident, now living in exile in London, were born in 1925 in Tbilisi, the capital of Soviet Georgia. Their father, Aleksandr Romanovich Medvedev, had been a Red Army political commissar during the Civil War and a teacher of Marxist philosophy. The most traumatic events in the Medvedevs' early life—ones that cast the dye for much of their later activities—was their father's arrest in the Stalinist purge of 1938 and his death in an Arctic labor camp in 1941. His father's arrest, Roy Medvedev says, was "frightening and completely incomprehensible, completely out of accord with the ideas of Leninism or Marxism or socialism. I understood that our lives had been visited by a great evil, but the extent of that evil I could not then understand." But he wanted to figure it out, so he decided to busy himself "with politics, with social science, to examine what is good and what is bad in our society."

Both brothers busied themselves with politics after World War II. Zhores became a prominent scientist and a leader in the assault on the fraudulent genetic theories of T.D. Lysenko. Lysenko enjoyed Joseph Stalin's blessing and retarded the development of Soviet science for decades. Zhores' *samizdat* publications incurred the wrath of the authorities, who committed him involuntarily to a psychiatric hospital in 1970. Released following protests by prominent scientists, Zhores was stripped of Soviet citizenship shortly thereafter and has been living abroad ever since. In exile, he has written several books, including *Nuclear Disaster in the Urals*, an account of a '50s nuclear accident that makes Chernobyl look like a firecracker, biographies of Yuri Andropov and Gorbachov and, most recently, a study of Soviet agriculture.

Roy Medvedev became a prominent educator and joined the Communist Party in 1956, the year of Nikita Khrushchev's famous "secret speech" on the crimes of Stalin—and the year his father was posthumously

Roy Medvedev talks about his 25-year fight for *glasnost*

ously rehabilitated. When the 22nd Party Congress issued a renewed call for de-Stalinization in 1961, he began work on what was to become perhaps the definitive account of the Stalin era, *Let History Judge*. Although originally intended for publication in the Soviet Union, the Central Committee denied it permission. Expelled from the party in 1969, Medvedev suffered more than 15 years of harassment and intimidation. Like his subsequent works on Khrushchev, Nikolai Bukharin, Stalin's cohorts and the

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prospects of reform in the USSR, *Let History Judge* has still not been published in the Soviet Union.

In 1971 Medvedev finished *On Socialist Democracy*. In it, he identified three tendencies in the party: reactionary neo-Stalinists (who enjoyed favor under Leonid Brezhnev), moderate-conservatives or centrists, and party democrats, whom he characterized as "a left-wing group within the party that proceeds from a communist, Marxist-Leninist position." This group carried with it the possibility of genuine socialism, Medvedev wrote, a claim that seemed utopian as late as 1984.

Then came Gorbachov. While it is too soon to make any final assessment of his official attempts to open and restructure and democratize the Soviet Union, his rise to power testifies to Medvedev's perspicacity.

With this idea in mind, I wrote to Roy Medvedev in August 1987 to elicit his views on current Soviet developments. I mailed two copies, one via Zhores in London and one to Roy's Moscow address. The second letter was an experiment: had *glasnost* penetrated the Soviet postal service? It hadn't.

Four months later came the reply, including a handwritten letter in English from Zhores and a typewritten answer from Roy in Russian.

The letter began with an apology for the delay:

"I did not get the original letter at my Moscow address because everything regarding me remains severely controlled. I don't get mail from foreigners or, for the most part, from anyone else. My reply to you, therefore, is tardy because I am not able simply to put it in the mail. Though my situation is growing better, there is still a 'postal blockade.'"

"Support from people in the West has been very important for me. But many types of people also support me here in the Soviet Union."

Here are Medvedev's answers to my questions:

Does Gorbachov enjoy enough party support to carry out his reforms?

Gorbachov, of course, has sufficient support within the party. Without such support he would not be able to stay in power. But there are still many opponents to political reform and to Gorbachov's faction. And among Gorbachov's supporters and in his "coalition for change," there are influential politicians who did not wish to go as far with these reforms

as Gorbachov has. Therefore, every move forward involves complicated political and interparty struggles. Many reforms are already impossible to turn back, but some are not fully accomplished. It is necessary to spend much time on a more drawn out path.... Likewise the anger brought out in October at the plenary session of the Central Committee at which Boris Yeltsin was dismissed for his dramatic, but not especially timely or successful, statement shows that the movement forward is not weakening but is amplifying different types of friction and obstacles. The months following the 19th Party Conference (June 20) will in many regards be decisive.

[At the October Central Committee meeting referred to, Moscow Party leader Yeltsin made a speech denouncing the slowness of reforms and offering his resignation. In November, he was fired and himself denounced for, in Gorbachov's words, "putting his personal ambition ahead of the interests of the party." Observers are still trying to interpret the meaning of his downfall. He has since been reappointed to a lesser but influential position in the state construction industry.]

Many people in the West view Afghanistan as a stumbling block for progress in the Soviet Union, just as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels warned that a socialist state could "force no blessings" on an underdeveloped nation without undermining its own gains.

Of course, Afghanistan is a very big problem in both the foreign and domestic policies of the Soviet Union. But progress in democratization, *glasnost* and *perestroika* coexists simultaneously with the search for solutions in Afghanistan. The problem was born with the complete incompetence of the Soviet leadership in 1979. This is related to the U.S. attempt to establish a strategic alliance with China, which was directed against the USSR. The American-Chinese union against the USSR did not hold up, but it is now necessary to withdraw Soviet forces, as the U.S. did in Vietnam. The goodwill and combined efforts of several sides are needed to reach a reasonable compromise.

Is there resistance to *perestroika* among ordinary citizens?

Many ordinary workers, rural people, students, schoolteachers, doctors and scientific workers oppose *perestroika*. It would have been easier to conduct reconstruction after the tyrannical regime of Stalin than after the corrupt and lazy do-nothing apparatus of the Brezhnev era, when for 20 years everyone became used to working poorly. [Reconstruction proceeds] with more difficulty when indifference pervades than when people felt themselves to be better off and were interested and talented. First it is necessary to raise work standards, sometimes even to go for temporary sacrifices in consumption. Prosperity arrives later. It is easier to make changes in cultural spheres than in the production of automobiles and computers.

How is *glasnost* affecting you?

For me it is not especially significant, but

there are some changes. Recently I received my first official invitation to lecture about Stalin and Stalinism to an audience of teachers of the Russian language from Socialist and Western countries, which meets every year in the USSR.... Several influential scholars from the areas of the social sciences wanted to renew acquaintances with me that had lapsed since the beginning of the '70s. I did not insult people who in the '70s avoided me. They are now starting to lead in useful work and require support.

Do you think people like Bukharin and Leon Trotsky and other old Bolsheviks murdered by Stalin may someday be rehabilitated?

Bukharin and all who were regarded as "right" deviationists will soon be completely rehabilitated. Gorbachov's speech on November 2 seems an important step toward this. When our press observes the 100th anniversary of Bukharin's birth this year, a memorial to him will be established. But Trotsky's position has changed much less. The situation here is more complicated, from both the historical and ideological point of view. Trotsky has merit, and he was important in 1917 and in 1918-20. Some changes in the evaluation of Trotsky are already occurring.... But many people both among politicians and cultural workers deserve to be remembered in larger measure than Trotsky.

They are the concern of my books on history, which I think will sooner or later be published in the Soviet Union. They have largely been written from the perspective of Soviet rather than Western readers. Already five of my books have been published in Yugoslavia and seven by the Communist Party publishing house in Italy.

One reviewer wrote that your work was an attempt to salvage the honor and history of the October Revolution from the Stalinists.

Of course, I hope to be able to help save the moral and political honor of socialism, which was born in the world after the October Revolution. The birth was extremely difficult, and the child brought forth was viable but not especially attractive. To correct that situation is hard, but possible. In every revolution the foundations of both progress and rebirth are laid. But revolution is only the beginning and is less difficult than all that must be done [afterward]. □

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By David Moberg

SMYRNA, TENNESSEE

FOR TWO YEARS GLADYS BAINES TRIED TO get a job at the new, state-of-the-art auto assembly plant that Nissan built just outside this lackluster little town in middle Tennessee. She had done hard factory work most of her life, and the Nissan job would mean going from \$5 an hour to more than \$11 an hour.

"I went out there to stay 'til I retired," she says. "That job meant everything to me. I could support my family, send my kids to college. But they stripped everything from me."

Everything included not only her job, but her health. In the summer of 1985, as she recounts her story, she was being trained for a new assembly job. But that day a couple of people were absent. Since the Nissan plant had far fewer workers to provide relief in such situations than most auto factories, she was suddenly forced to do an unfamiliar job with the speed typical of the Smyrna operation. Working under trucks she was assembling, she felt something give out in her back. Despite the pain, she kept coming back to work, as the company doctor treated her for a pulled muscle.

"They said I had no right to go to my own doctor," she recalls. "They said I'd have to go to one of their 'brought-out' doctors."

By October doctors had hospitalized her and diagnosed a "bulging disk" in her back as the source of the nearly crippling pain. In May 1986 they said she could go back to work, but only to do light duty work. But Baines has never been back to work. By June of that year, her workmen's compensation insurance was exhausted and the insurance she now has won't cover the continuing expenses of her injury.

Nissan's management "keeps saying they have no light duty work," she says, "but they put other people on light work. They just do what they can to get rid of you. They tried to get me to quit. I had been told that after you are injured they'll try to get rid of you. I thought it was talk, but it was the truth."

For a long time she kept quiet, hoping that she could get back on at Nissan, since she couldn't get work at any other factory with her injury. "I didn't want to lose my job," Baines, now 41, said. "They had me scared to death a long time. But I thought if I didn't stand up for myself, who would? I decided the workers there need a union. They need it bad, and I never was for it before. If this company gets away, as they have, destroying hundreds of lives, what's the future for our children?"

Baines' story and many like it belie the early image of the Nissan plant. Announced in 1980, Nissan's \$848 million stamping and assembly plant for trucks—and later cars—was supposed to be not only technologically advanced but a model of humane management, treating workers as "our most important resource" and giving them a voice in important decisions.

And it was supposed to be non-union. So far it has been, from the non-union workforce that built the plant and launched construction worker protests to the 3,200 current employees, including the 2,400 "technicians," or production workers. There are also 400 subcontracted positions, many of them the light duty ones injured Nissan workers could but aren't allowed to do.

The Nissan challenge: Now the United Auto Workers (UAW), building on the frustrations of workers who feel the Nissan promise has been betrayed, are trying to organize the factory. With the rapid expansion of

Japanese auto and parts manufacturing in the U.S., the Nissan challenge is especially important. The UAW had to pull back its drive at Honda in Ohio last year, but succeeded in winning a contract at Mazda's new Michigan factory—partly because Mazda, unlike Honda and Nissan, did not fight the union.

Nissan carefully screened the 100,000 original applicants and trained its new hires extensively. Management introduced a grab bag of devices to build team spirit. It promised no lay-offs and promoted involvement circles to discuss problems (and combat unions, says UAW chief organizer Jim Turner) that now involve about 500 workers. There is a 10-minute morning meeting for each work group (the original Japanese-style songs and calisthenics were quickly dropped), rotation of jobs within a work team (in theory), informal managerial dress, occasional pizza and beer parties for workers and quarterly meetings of all employees. Disciplined workers have the option of going before a Peer Review. In 1984 *Fortune* magazine called the plant one of the 10 best-managed factories in America.

But as production stepped up, so did problems. There were increasing complaints of excessive workloads, inadequate substitutes for absent workers, harassment of outspoken workers, arbitrariness and favoritism, and injuries—especially from "repetitive traumas" to wrists and arms. Workers increasingly concluded that if they complained they would be assigned to the worst tasks or even forced out of their jobs. A few of them approached the UAW, which began holding educational meetings. Last year it launched a serious organizing effort; several hundred came to a January kick-off of a union card-signing drive.

Despite the Japanese ownership, Nissan's Smyrna plant was originally run by Marvin Runyon, a former Ford executive. And even though Runyon said he adapted some tactics from the Japanese, he insisted it was not a Japanese-style factory. Although often described as more worker-oriented than traditional U.S. factories, Japanese auto factories are intensified traditional assembly lines, not the more innovative, worker-paced team efforts of Swedish auto plants. Turner argues it does not resemble most contemporary Ford plants, with their superficial employee involvement, as much as hard-driven U.S. auto factories of the past.

Now the Nissan operation faces new pressures. Although it will declare its first profit this fiscal year ending in March, sales are lagging and there is a backlog inventory of at least four months sales. Runyon, who last spring said he would stay on another 15 years, mysteriously left his \$686,000-a-year job last fall. The UAW insists that the comparatively heavy management overhead burdens production workers, and other industry observers blame use of old Ford management style for the failure to reach top industry efficiency standards. Turner says that a Louisville, Ky., Ford truck plant requires a total of 19 employee-hours per truck, compared to 25 or 26 hours per truck at Nissan, if all factory overhead employment is included. But comparable union-organized plants have many more production workers than Nissan.

MIT researcher John Krafcik says that the Smyrna plant is inefficiently large and burdened with more high technology than it probably needs. But its productivity is comparable to Japanese Nissan plants and its quality ratings very high. Runyon said his plant beat the Big Three in productivity but did not match the most efficient transplants,



Members of the in-plant United Auto Workers organizing committee (left to right): Mike Williams, Lisa Br...

apparently including the unionized NUMMI plan in California (a joint GM-Toyota project). Krafcik doesn't see any management need to keep out the UAW. "It won't make a grain of difference in their productivity whether the union is there," he said. "If you compare NUMMI to Nissan or Honda, their productivity capabilities are on a par. Mazda, which is unionized, is going to have eye-popping levels of productivity."

Work that never stops: Workers on the line, in any case, say they feel extreme work

pressure. "It's not what they led us to believe when we were taking our training," says Kenny Kemp, a 28-year-old body shop worker. "We thought the jobs wouldn't be too bad for a person to do, and people would be treated fairly in a good working environment. But when you leave each day you are so tired and overworked, you don't feel like doing anything else. The work is real hard for anybody. I used to work pretty hard at a job I had, used to farm and cut my own wood at home. This is much harder—harder than

Despite Nissan's anti-union paranoia, "It won't make a grain of difference in [the plant's] productivity



Nissan Motor Mfg. Corp.



m, Peggy Gleissner and Wendell Curvin.

n's future?

anything I've ever done. The pace is so fast, and there's so much more work non-stop all day long. But you're kind of afraid to say too much to supervisors."

Kemp has had surgery three times on his shoulder. "We had to do a lot of jerking and pulling heavy weights," he says. "It jerked my shoulder to where my ligaments and muscle are stretched. The motions, the stretching overhead, causes pretty much pain." After the first operation, "I was afraid I'd lose my job if I didn't come back."

f the union is there," says one expert.



Then he was injured again. "My doctor said it would be wise not to do the job, but the company doctor [and a human resource officer] tried to encourage me to quit," Kemp says. "By that time I was psychologically in such a state I didn't say anything more. There were a couple of people I'd known personally who were told if they couldn't do the job they'd be out. I was so worried. I know other people are scared like that, too, but I don't think a company should do people like that. They tell me if we had a union it wouldn't be like this." After his second operation last October Kemp's doctor told him to avoid heavy work. Since then Nissan has not called him back to work.

Ralph Hastings—pseudonym of a former supervisor who did not want his name used—knew the story from the other side. A veteran auto industry foreman, Hastings was shocked by the way Nissan drove its employees, including supervisors. Nissan management, despite its claims to benevolent paternalism, is "Klannistic," he said, "an evil management," a "dictatorship" that "manages by intimidation."

Although the original plan called for rotation of jobs to minimize exhaustion and injury, Hastings said that rotation became much less common as production picked up. (Some workers say rotation has increased—and the line speed slightly decreased—since the organizing drive started.) At times he would try line jobs of workers under him and find them impossible to do for very long. He was especially struck by the comments of a visiting Japanese engineer who said the local management was "crazy" for trying to use only 17 workers to do a job that in Japan required 21.

Each team of roughly 20 workers has one lead worker and two training leads. The lead worker not only helps set up jobs and provide emergency breaks, but also fills in for missing workers. In union plants, however, in addition to such a "utility" operator there have typically been absentee relief operators and a general labor pool on which to draw. Nissan has no such back-up system, thus putting pressure on both "technicians" and their "area managers."

At one supervisory anti-union training meeting, the upper level manager stepped out momentarily, Hastings says. Then one foreman said to the group, "We're all assholes. If this place was organized, we'd all be better off. We wouldn't have to work on the line because there would be more people. And we'd have a book to run by." Nobody in the room dissented.

"The workload is so great that the utility person is working a job," Hastings says. "If somebody is absent, you don't have a labor pool to draw on. If flu season is going around, you do the work yourself, double the workloads or let the damn thing go down the line. They expect a supervisor to keep the line running and don't care if people shit or pee in their pants. There have been cases of men and women pissing in their pants.... How can something like that be happening in this country?"

"Where did my rights go?" Nissan is proud of its low absenteeism, but workers say managers badger sick workers to stay on the job. Dennis Brewer, 24 said his foreman once pressured him to come to work while he was sick, then had to let him go home as his fever reached 102 degrees. One employee whose supervisor told him to return to work despite severe pneumonia got his termination notice while in the hospital.

When Hastings was shifted to a new department, he found many injured workers



UAW organizer Jim Turner.

struggling to keep up, including one seriously injured and barely functioning man who Nissan had threatened to fire if he didn't say that he had injured his back at home, not on the job.

In recent years the Nissan plant's injury rate has been near the national average for the auto industry, but Hastings and others said many injuries are not reported. For example, Peggy Gleissner says she could find no record in the state files for her plant accident that broke three toes. But whenever workers were injured or became identified as troublemakers, Hastings says, supervisors were encouraged to find ways to get rid of them, such as putting them on hard jobs so they could be written up for poor performance.

"Once the person was no good, the operations manager would ask if there was anything we could write them up for? Is there a problem of absenteeism, anything we can get rid of them for?" Hastings says.

"Here's my boss coming to me to get rid of a good worker who was injured. If people used the open-door policy, they were branded troublemakers. With confidential hot-line calls, [management would] sit down and try to find out who made the calls."

When Jackie Dickson, after suffering a pinched nerve, complained to plant managers that his supervisor was suggesting he quit because he was too old to do the work, supervisory harassment increased. Shifted to another department, he was told his work wasn't adequate. Dickson, a known union supporter, hinted that he might file a lawsuit. The next day he was summarily fired for insubordination and threatening a foreman, he said. Massively depressed by this treatment, he continues his thus far unsuccessful legal battle against the company, foiled in part by Tennessee law that allows employers to fire at will.

"If someone can walk up and take away my job just on somebody else's word when I've got a spotless job record," Dickson asks, "where did my American rights go?"

Even some workers selected by management for interviews with *In These Times* complain of the heavy workload. For example, Dexter King, 27, selected as someone not sympathetic to the union, says, "Our workload is heavy. No denying. It has at times got harder when there's demand for production."

Could he do it at age 45? "I don't think so," he answers.

But workers at Nissan complain about more than heavy workloads, inadequate relief, injuries, intimidation and the efforts to eliminate workers who are seen as trou-

blemakers or are physically incapacitated. "My biggest gripe is we have no written policies to go by," Gleissner says. Human Resources Director Bucky Kahl points to volumes of written policies in rejoinder, but workers say the rules change regularly, without any consultation with them, and those rules are applied arbitrarily. For example, Gleissner says, one woman was docked a day's pay for missing work during a snowstorm, even though she had accumulated 100 hours for paid time off, and another man—one of the supervisor's favorites—was paid despite missing the day.

"Put up with it": Nissan management has also refused to act against sexual harassment in the factory, according to Teresa Caudill and Cassandra Ezell, whose lawsuits will be heard in May. A male co-worker in the quality assurance area repeatedly pulled, grabbed and kissed them and other women, made lewd gestures and constantly propositioned them. "The supervisor said he knew what was going on, that he'd go to upper management and he was upset," Caudill says. But his superior told her, "We just don't believe you," she says. "You're just trying to get him fired."

The operations manager offered to move her, which angered her since he, not she, was the problem. Then she was kept on the job with her aggressor, even though he continued to harass her. Her new supervisor advised her, "You're just going to have to learn to put up with him. We're just one family here," Caudill recounts. "My supervisor said if I hear you saying anything about this, you'll be fired. They try to intimidate you. That's one reason we need a union."

Ezell's experience of the same harassment, and refusal of management to remedy it, was compounded: the company fired her, she says, for "causing too much commotion throughout the plant."

But despite the growing list of grievances, some workers still identify with management and remain resolutely anti-union—and who may have the easier jobs.

"I'm not in favor of a union anywhere," says maintenance technician Doug Rasbury, who thinks Nissan is a "great" place to work. "I see all the other auto industry laying off people, cutting their benefits. I don't see unions do anything about it. And they have strikes."

Kahl insists management isn't anti-union, just "pro-employee." But from the beginning Nissan has explicitly educated its workers against any "third party" in the workplace. Nissan recently gave workers free T-shirts that said, "I can speak for myself" (to which one worker appended, "but nobody listens"). And it distributed hundreds of buttons that read "Unemployed Auto Worker," as part of its relentless campaign to associate the union with layoffs.

Meanwhile, the union says Nissan's sales problems are ominous indicators of future layoffs made without seniority rules. And although Nissan says that recently the workforce attrition has been only 2.3 percent a year, the union argues it's actually several times higher—a concealed form of layoff by pushing people out of work and hiring nobody new since last June. But some workers still trust Nissan, because there have been no formal layoffs so far. (Despite somewhat lower wages and benefits than under UAW contracts, money is not a big organizing issue.)

Some workers from rural Tennessee are culturally ill-disposed to unions and unfamiliar with them (one thought he would au-

EDITORIAL



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Jackson is riding and building a new left wave

In Maine, Alaska, Hawaii—even in Nevada—where Jesse Jackson got from 25-35 percent of primary or caucus votes, the handwriting was on the wall. But it took his sweeping victory in Michigan, where he won an estimated 35 percent of the white vote and carried cities like Grand Rapids, Saginaw, Lansing and Kalamazoo, to be taken seriously by party leaders and media pundits. Now it is being acknowledged that Jackson's "message" is heard not only by ethnic minorities, gays and middle-class liberals, but also by white blue-collar workers.

And the pundits and political consultants are suddenly discovering that money and professional organization aren't everything. As one Democratic Party official said of Michael Dukakis' effort in Michigan, he has "terrific organization, plenty of dough, no message whatsoever." Of course, that's not quite true. Dukakis has a message. Most of the time it is that he is the one "who knows how to balance budgets, knows how to make those tough choices." In short, that he is the best administrator—and, therefore, the best qualified for the job of president.

But people are unsatisfied with things as they are. They are looking not for someone who can continue present government policies more efficiently, but for someone who understands their real problems and who is committed to working in their interest. As New York Gov. Mario Cuomo says, that's what Jackson has going for him—"he speaks specifically about real problems, in a way the other candidates do not."

New movement: Jackson's campaign has steadily expanded his base of support. This has been possible largely because of his personal efforts over the past four years, but also because he is most in tune with popular rejection of Reaganism and growing interest in a return to government support for social programs. His calls for deep cuts in military spending, for an end to intervention in Central America, for federal intervention in support of industrial jobs, and

various education, housing and health programs puts him at the head of an emerging new liberal movement that his rivals do not fully understand or support. He is, in short, both riding and building a wave for the renewal of a popular left in the United States.

And Jackson's solid base in the black community, bolstered by his long-term activity in support of workers on strike or at plant closings and farmers in danger of losing their farms, gives his message and his candidacy a credibility that his rivals can't match. It gives him a constituency whose level of commitment, excitement—at times, passion—has been unknown in national politics in recent years.

This makes Jackson particularly effective in caucus situations like Michigan's, where highly motivated voters are much more likely to participate, and carry disproportionately more weight. A caucus, however, is not a primary election, and a primary election is not a general election. In electoral terms Jackson's support is still marginal. That is one reason why Democratic Party leaders are in a panic over his leading position in the presidential race—the other being the popular response to his policies. For if Jackson goes on to win the major primaries in New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and California—which is no longer unthinkable, though still unlikely—he may win the nomination, but go on to lose badly in the general election.

Winning and losing? That, of course, is a danger not only to Democratic Party leaders, but also to Jackson's constituents. A Jackson nomination would almost certainly mean a George Bush presidency and a Republican Senate, something that Jackson is unlikely to want for his supporters. His personal interest, as well as his constituents', would best be served by a Democratic victory. But in the long run, a Jackson nomination that resulted in a defeat at the polls might not be a total disaster. It might well speed the realignment of American politics. In 1972, George McGovern's defeat was also a defeat for the left, which ended up fragmented and directionless. McGovern's nomination, however, was built around a single issue—the Vietnam War. Unlike Jackson, McGovern had no substantial core constituencies, and his nomination came as a popular wave was receding, rather than building. McGovern's defeat was the final shattering of the '60s New Left. A Jackson defeat could be only one step in the rebuilding of a left.

IN THESE TIMES

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LETTERS

Torture

I WAS GLAD TO SEE YOUR COVERAGE ABOUT TREATING torture victims (ITT, March 9). But as a social worker volunteer at the Center for Victims of Torture in Minneapolis, I was disappointed that the story failed to mention the organization. Established as a non-profit agency in 1985 and opened in May 1986, the center was the first treatment facility in the U.S. specifically for torture victims (Center for Victims of Torture, 722 Fulton St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; [612] 331-1820). As the story points out, resources and services for victims of torture are few and far between. This makes it especially important not to under-report what does exist.

Treating victims of torture is a new undertaking. It is hardly surprising to find that victims and professionals experience difficulties in seeking and in offering such treatment. What is a source of interest and hope is what we can learn from the difficulties encountered, in order to work with care-providers to develop culturally appropriate and effective approaches to community education, identification and treatment.

Leigh Bristol-Kagan, Ph.D.
St. Paul, Minn.

Pipe dreams

IN HIS ARTICLE ON ISRAEL (ITT, MARCH 9) JOSHUA Henkin offers us an embarrassingly naive interpretation of U.S. Mideast policy. "Ultimately," he writes, "the U.S. has continued to support Israel less because of strategic interests than because Israel adheres to democratic principles." It is hard to say which notion is more laughable: that Israel adheres to democratic principles, or that our foreign policy has anything to do with such principles in the first place.

How does Henkin account for the dramatic escalation of U.S. military aid to Israel following its victory in the 1967 war—and after the beginning of the occupation, which he so earnestly deplors? Was it in response to a sudden flowering of Israel's "democratic principles"? Or did it, perhaps, reflect a cold reassessment of Israel's value to the U.S. as a regional proxy, due to such an impressive display of violence?

Salim Yaqub
Emeryville, Calif.

Zionism and racism

I AM REALLY SICK OF HEARING ZIONISM EQUATED with racism, most recently in your paper. I want someone to tell me how Zionism, a national movement centered around a religion, has anything to do with race. As everyone knows, there are white Jews and brown Jews and black Jews and Arab Jews and Oriental Jews and Indian Jews and Hispanic Jews and American Indian Jews. The Jewish population in Israel today is less than half of European origin.

How can anyone call a country that goes to unbelievable and unprecedented lengths to rescue 10,000 black African Jews from Ethiopia racist? Why is Zionism, the world's one patriotic movement, condemned as racist?

Part of the ugly truth is that implicit in this "Zionism is racism" business is the idea that the Jewish people form somehow a distinct race—which is an absolutely classic anti-Semitic idea. (Just ask someone from the Ku Klux Klan if Jews are white.) Another

part of the ugly truth is that such slogans are part of a particularly cheap and disgusting new rhetoric that tries to equate Jews—or at least Jewish Israelis—with racists and Nazis. This is a perversion of language, a slander to Jews and an insult to their martyrs and heroes.

Paul Goldsman
Atlanta

Free rides

WILLIAM BOWLES' "FCC MAY UNPLUG MANY hackers" (ITT, Feb. 3) argues that a monthly access fee for computer-to-computer communication could sabotage citizen communication via computer. His argument has elements that must be considered. But it assumes that ratepayers who are the backbone of the universal phone network and who typically use only dial-tone service should continue to subsidize computer-to-computer communicators who use the phone lines disproportionately and are overwhelmingly corporate.

But why should users of voice service pay a monthly access charge, while corporations making profits from their ability to plug into the network and use it extensively for computer services pay no more than those merely using it for voice service? There is a cost involved here, after all. With rising use of the phone network, expansion and replacement needs come quicker, and the ratepayers are asked jointly to shoulder that burden in higher rates.

Historically, individual users have paid disproportionately for access to the system, and more disproportionately since 1983 and divestiture. Some consumer groups have been arguing for a long time that, if we are to have a pay-as-you-go regulatory plan, some provision should be made for payment according to value received.

The access charges on computer-to-computer communications were in the works since the institution of access charges, but they were delayed because the pro-competition FCC wanted to give companies providing this new service a break. However, this use of the system has been dramatically successful, and now represents a substantial demand on the network. Such charges may be a needed signal both to individuals and corporations that the phone network does not come free for computer use.

There are options to consider, in the provision of a communications future that doesn't outprice the little-guy computer user while not requiring the little-guy voice user without a computer to pay for large corporate computer use. One is a regulatory framework that targets enhanced serv-

ice provider companies and corporate use; another is to hammer out agreements on rebates of individual subscriber line charges proportional to gains to the phone network from the new access charges; to devise monitoring to assess the justice of particular rates; and even to reconsider the entire access-charge formula. But it seems counterproductive to assume that the growing number of computer-to-computer communicators (mostly corporate) deserve to use the national phone network, paid for by rising monthly phone bills by primarily voice users, for free.

Pat Aufderheide
Washington, D.C.

Cockburned

ALEXANDER COCKBURN'S PEJORATIVE PRESENTATION of the recent debate among peace groups over the March 13 Democratic contra aid alternative was unfortunate (ITT, March 16). Rebuttals typically generate more heat than light, but a response is required. For Cockburn to characterize support of the plan as a "sellout" of peace groups is a snide presumption of monopoly on virtue, and a willful ignorance of American political realities.

The choice was difficult and painful for both sides and was not taken lightly by anyone. Some supported the plan as an unfortunate but necessary step in defeating Reagan's military policy, some opposed it even though they believed the only alternative would be more military aid in an escalation of the conflict, and some did not accept that analysis. Yet despite these differences, the broad coalition for peace in Central America remains intact.

My support for the bill was predicated on two points. First, that a majority in Congress does not oppose aid to the contras. Our narrow defeat of the Reagan plan on February 3 was achieved when a group of moderate members opposed the administration after House leaders promised a future vote on a non-military aid package. Rep. Les Aspin (D-WI) said in his February 3 press release, "I have decided to vote against the president's contra aid package as a result of assurances I have received from the Democratic leadership that Congress will soon have the opportunity to vote for a credible package of non-military aid." Members like Aspin provided the margin of victory and would have supported Reagan's military aid package if the only option was no aid because they, unfortunately, believe that some kind of aid to the contras is necessary. As much as I or anyone else disagree, it is what these members believe as they cast their votes in Congress. To think,

as Cockburn wrote, that the peace movement or liberal members have the power to "permit" either these moderates or the right wing to frame the debate in these terms is to assume much more power than we have.

Second, House leaders fear that without an alternative plan in place the White House will soon resurrect the policy of military pressure as the only way to influence events in Central America. Reagan has continued his steady drumbeat of Red-baiting, and recent events show the lengths he will go to in order to get more military aid to the contras. The House leadership, as well as some liberal members and peace activists, therefore, felt the choice was not whether a package would pass but what kind: one that provided explicit military assistance and gave Reagan control of future aid votes, or one that would de-escalate the war and keep control of aid votes with Congress.

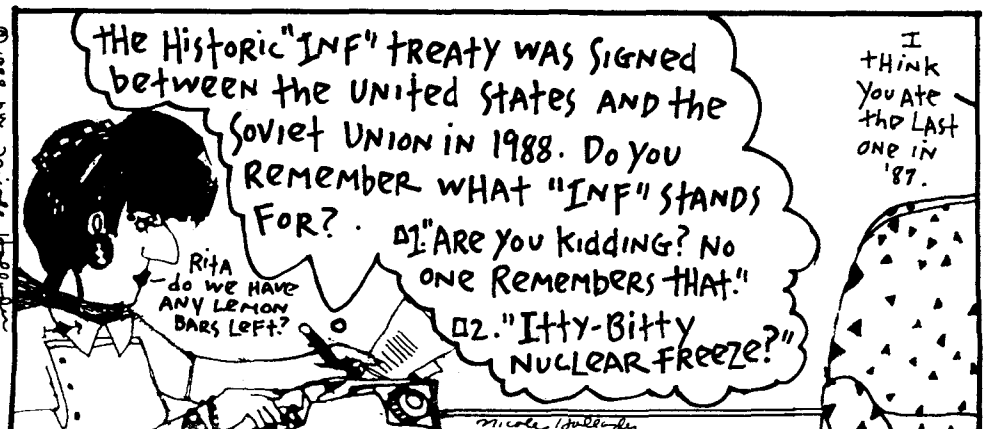
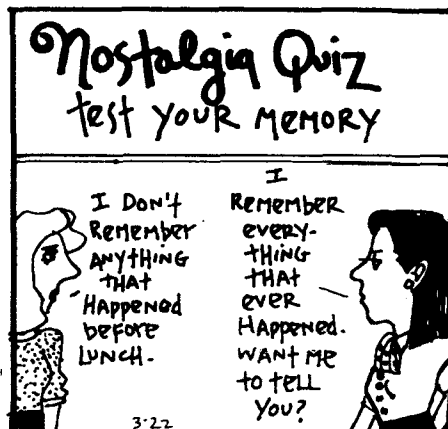
I assume that Cockburn did not give the specifics of the Democratic package because of space limitations, but no one should ignore them in a rush to take the moral high ground. The worst part of the bill would have given sustenance aid to the contras while they continue to hold arms (\$14.56 million for the purchase and transportation of food, clothing, shelter and medicine). But it would have also changed the direction of U.S. policy toward Nicaragua with incentives for both the contras and the Sandinistas to negotiate a cease-fire in good faith, explicitly prohibit lethal and non-lethal military supplies, and provide for shifting delivery of aid from the U.S. government to private voluntary organizations with a cessation of hostilities. It kept control of future aid votes out of the hands of the White House. Perhaps most importantly, it also included a sizeable portion of genuine humanitarian aid to Nicaraguan Indians (\$1.44 million) and to child victims of the war (\$14.56 million)—half for children inside Honduras and half for those inside Nicaragua, to be administered through private organizations like CARE or the International Red Cross. This provision would be a first step toward healing the ravages of war.

I take offense when sectarian ideologues like Cockburn dictate one road to peace and justice in a thoughtless, vituperative and dismissive manner. Men and women who have worked long and hard to achieve peace felt compelled to make this agonizing choice, and he owes them an apology.

Loomis Mayfield
Washington, D.C.

(formerly with the national staff of
Countdown '87: Campaign to End Contra Aid)

SYLVIA





Hurdles in Jackson's presidential race

By John B. Judis

REV. JESSE JACKSON'S POLITICAL VIEWS bear little resemblance to those of an Alabama segregationist, but Jackson's 1988 campaign is beginning to confound Democratic Party elders in much the same way George Wallace's 1972 campaign did. In 1972 Wallace got 51 percent in the Michigan Democratic primary to 27 percent for South Dakota Sen. George McGovern, demonstrating that he could win a Northern state and putting him in a position to enter the convention that summer with as many delegates as any other candidate. Speculation abounded about a Wallace vice-presidential nomination.

After Wallace's primary victory, Michigan Democratic leaders changed to what they believed was a more controllable caucus system—in effect, screening out the "Wallace rabble." But what goes around comes around. In the March 26 Michigan caucus Jackson scored a two-to-one victory over Gov. Michael Dukakis, the candidate of the party establishment. If the primary system provided a vehicle for Wallace's right-wing populism, the caucus system, in which 200,000 of Michigan's 5.7 million registered voters participated, provided the perfect one for Jackson's left-wing, movement-oriented populism.

Of course, national party leaders now take a different view of Jackson's nomination than they did of Wallace's. In 1972 most Democratic leaders believed that they couldn't accept Wallace as the party's nominee. In 1988 most Democratic officials believe that if Jackson wins a plurality of the delegates in the primaries and caucuses, they cannot deny him the nomination. To attempt to do so would not only split the party politically but would also betray the Democrats' commitment to racial justice.

But the political question posed by Wallace's success in 1972 and Jackson's in 1988 is remarkably similar. In both cases, party leaders find themselves torn between moral and political priorities. They cannot abandon their commitment to civil rights. But

at the same time they cannot hope to form a majority party without the support of the Southern whites and Northern white ethnics who were attracted to Wallace in 1972 (before he withdrew from the race after being shot by an assassin in May) and who may be turned off by Jackson in 1988.

The Bradley factor: Jackson could win the Democratic nomination. If his two lackluster opponents, Dukakis and Sen. Al Gore, split the Jewish vote in New York City, Jackson could win New York. And if Gore and Dukakis continue to slug it out, Jackson could hold his own in the major remaining primary states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio and California, all of which have substantial minority populations. Even though he could win only a plurality and not a majority of delegates, party leaders would have a difficult time denying him the nomination. But if he were nominated at the Democratic convention he would encounter several formidable obstacles in beating the probable Republican candidate, Vice President George Bush, in the general election.

First, he would face a substantial core of white voters, many of them erstwhile Democrats—who will not vote for a black presidential candidate. This might be called the "Bradley factor," named after black Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, because it even affected a politician as moderate as Bradley.

In 1982, with the Reagan recession putting Republicans on the defensive, Bradley, a respected two-term mayor, ran for governor of California against Attorney General George Deukmejian. Deukmejian was badly battered in the Republican primary against more conservative opponents and was trailing by almost 20 percent a month before the general election. Bradley, a former policeman with no background in the civil rights movement, concentrated on assuring white voters that he was not a militant. The dull Deukmejian ran a responsible and, it was thought, ineffective campaign. On the eve of the election, the polls still showed Bradley winning. But the next day he lost to Deukmejian.

Los Angeles Times pollster I.A. Lewis attributed Bradley's defeat to an anti-black vote that did not show up in conventional opinion polls. By cross-tabulating respondents' answers to a general questionnaire with their vote on Bradley-Deukmejian, Lewis claimed that seven to eight percent of the voters—primarily white middle class—voted for Deukmejian simply because Bradley was black.

No matter what kind of campaign he ran, Jackson could enter the general election with an even greater handicap than Bradley had. Unlike Bradley, Jackson has been an outspoken advocate of affirmative action, busing and black political power. And many in the South and Midwest are less tolerant than Californians, who during the '70s had a black lieutenant governor and state superintendent of schools. Jackson's "unfavorable" ratings among white Democrats in the South and North—a crude barometer of backlash sentiments—continue to hover between 40 and 60 percent. In the Illinois primary, for instance, 63 percent of Sen. Paul Simon's supporters looked upon Jackson unfavorably.

Charge of extremism: Jackson would also face strong opposition from some constituencies because of his past and present political views. His attacks on American multinationals that export back to the U.S., his opposition to intervention abroad and his call for reducing military expenditures have struck a responsive chord among many voters. But Jackson's opponents in the fall, which would include conservative Democrats as well as Republicans, would charge that these views represent a larger pattern of economic recklessness and indifference to both defense and the spread of communism.

In a general election Jackson would be repeatedly confronted with his "Viva Fidel, viva Che" speech in Havana, his embrace of Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega and his statement that Zionism is a "poisonous weed." Virginia Lt. Gov. L. Douglas Wilder thinks that "Jackson frightens a lot of people with his foreign policy." His views on multinationals would also be subjected to the same

kind of withering appraisal that Rep. Richard Gephardt's trade proposals endured. In both cases, his opponents' aim would be to sow doubt about Jackson's reliability, to make voters uncertain about what he would really do as president.

Of course, in 1980 many political commentators tried to paint Ronald Reagan as an unstable extremist, but Reagan was able to parry these attacks in a way that Jackson cannot. Reagan could use his two terms as governor of California as proof that his critics' worst fears of what would happen under his presidency would not come to pass. Because Jackson has never held elected office, he cannot make a similar claim.

Against almost any Democrat, the Republicans begin with an electoral advantage. In presidential contests, the Republicans have won 23 states five times in a row, totalling 203 out of the 270 electoral votes necessary to win, while Democrats have won only the District of Columbia, totalling three electoral votes. If Jackson is the nominee, his vote would probably resemble that of McGovern in 1972: strongest in minority communities, college towns and in the educated and cosmopolitan upper-middle class, but weak among white, working-class Democrats, Independents and Jews.

Goldwater strategy: There is, however, a larger question: even if Jackson were routed in the fall, would his candidacy advance the causes to which he and his supporters are committed? In the 1964 presidential vote, Arizona Sen. Barry Goldwater was defeated in a landslide, but by establishing a new Republican beachhead in the South and West, Goldwater laid the groundwork for Nixon's and Reagan's victories. In 1928, Catholic Democrat Al Smith's unsuccessful candidacy also prepared the way for Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal majority. Would a Jackson candidacy lay the groundwork for a new populist and post-Cold War Democratic majority in the '90s? Or would it, like Wallace's in 1972, inadvertently lay the groundwork for a new Republican majority?

Even in the event of a rout in November, Jackson's candidacy could significantly benefit the Democrats. It could contribute toward breaking down racial prejudice and make it easier for the next black Democratic candidate to be treated simply as a Democrat rather than as a black. It could further a new Democratic politics based on the looming contradiction between corporate interest and national interest. And it could awaken the post-'60s Democrats and Independents who have largely eschewed politics for career and consumption. Jackson's campaign has already stirred a kind of enthusiasm on college campuses and elsewhere not seen since 1972.

But a defeat for Jackson could also have a down side. It could reinforce—rather than break down—the taboo against black presidential candidates. After Al Smith was routed in 1928, the Democrats did not nominate another Catholic for 32 years. It could enable the Republicans not only to win the presidency and the Senate in 1988, but also to build lasting support within the white middle class by reinforcing the pejorative image of the Democrats as the "black party." And it could splinter the Democrats along left-right and even racial lines.

In short, Jackson's nomination would be a leap into the political unknown. ■

By Lawrence Weschler

EARLIER THIS MONTH, THE *NEW YORK Post*, recently purchased by millionaire real estate developer Peter Kalikow from billionaire media tycoon Rupert Murdoch for a cool \$37 million, had itself a real scoop. Its March 10 final edition featured a full-page cover photo of a black woman, bundled in a plain winter coat, plain white plastic shopping bag tucked under her arm, standing in front of a boarded-up storefront and staring, somewhat contemptuously, at the camera. "BOGGS BEGS" proclaimed the boldface headline, under which a caption, in breathless italics, went on to elaborate: "This exclusive *Post* photo shows Billie Boggs panhandling on a midtown sidewalk. As a beggar, Boggs puts on a different face than she displays in her public appearances. She's been a celebrity since she was picked up in the city's drive to take the mentally-ill homeless off the streets. She said she took to the street on Sunday near her Times Square hotel—cursing at those who recognized and harassed her—because she had run out of money. Boggs said she collected \$10 in about an hour and pledged it 'will never happen again.'"

A few pages in, another large photo of Boggs on the street showed, in the words of its caption, "Billie Boggs panhandling. She said she 'needed \$10 to eat.'" "Billie Boggs confesses she was begging," ran the smaller-face headline above that photo; "I NEEDED \$10 TO SURVIVE" blared the much larger headline above the accompanying article. That article in turn resumed the theme of guilty knowledge: "Billie Boggs admitted yesterday she was panhandling over the weekend...."

What's the point? At first we had a hard time figuring out what precisely the story was here, the exclusive, the scoop. The fact that a once homeless woman, who the city had tried to have committed to a mental asylum but who had successfully fought off such incarceration in court, proving her sanity to the satisfaction of several expert witnesses and a presiding judge—that such a woman, though now admittedly housed in a single residence occupancy hotel, was still poor and hence still needed to panhandle: *that was a story?* That was news? As we examined the photos and the article more carefully, however, we began to realize that we weren't so much dealing with a fact here as a slant, not so much a text as a subtext. Key in this context was the choice of words—*confesses, admits, puts on a different face*—as if this woman's behavior were dark and secret, as if she'd somehow been attempting to veil that shameful behavior and it was only thanks to the *Post's* brilliant detective work that that veil had now been shunted aside, revealing her for what she always really was: a panhandler!

In this context, the business about her "pledging" to "never do it again" was particularly telling. It was as if Boggs had once more been caught engaged in some sort of recurring compulsive perversion, like drug-taking ("Billie, how many times do we have to tell you? *Just say no!*"), or even more like sexual exhibitionism. There she was again, exposing herself in public, and now, caught, she was once again offering up one of those pathetic, lame promises never to do it again. (Of course, panhandling *does* have a certain structural relationship with exhibitionism



Billie Boggs, who was thrown into a mental asylum for being homeless on the streets of New York—and later released after proving her sanity—has again become a center of attention.

New York media exposes shame of being homeless

—anonymous strangers opening themselves out before other passing strangers—only, it's not the panhandler whose dirty secret gets exposed in the interaction, but rather the passing citizen's, whose relative wealth and indifference is suddenly laid bare.)

The question of what business the *Post* (or we) had demanding or expecting that Boggs pledge never to do it again was never addressed in the piece. (Now, if Kalikow had announced that he was pledging a donation, an endowment, such that Boggs would never want for \$10 and therefore never *need* to do it again—that might have been news.) The reason the piece offered for Boggs' assurance that she'd never do it again was that she'd in the meantime secured a nest egg, "amounting to between \$8,000 and \$9,000," 18 months' worth of Social Security checks that her sisters had been withholding from her during the period they'd been trying to get her committed. The *Post* made it sound like the \$8,000-9,000 was some lavish sum, further undercutting her claim on our sympathies or even her right to have been out there panhandling (though, if you think about it, \$9,000 over 18 months is hardly going to keep anyone in New York City off the streets).

We thought about all that for a while and then set our thoughts aside, assuming that this had just been one more quirky and idiosyncratic instance of coverage on the part of a journal never particularly notorious for its sobriety. But then, to our surprise, virtually all the local television news programs that evening took up the *Post's* scoop—or else generated parallel scoops of their own—in many instances leading off their telecasts with this latest and most momentous development in the Boggs case, this *scandale*. Again, the subtext in virtually all these reports was that the true nature of this woman whose plight had been obsessing the city for weeks had now somehow shown through. She was shown to be a duplicitous back-slider, or else, perhaps, just crazy after all. "I feel sad," Mayor Koch was quoted as saying, "absolutely sad [about] someone who left the hospital against the will of the examining doctors—who, had she stayed there, would have received medical treatment that might have stabilized her on a permanent basis." To hear the mayor tell it, it wasn't \$10 Boggs needed to survive but rather psychotropic drugs.

The suspicion that panhandlers are either crazed or dissembling, of course, has

a rich heritage. In the midst of this recent flare-up, we were reminded of at-that-time presidential counsellor Edwin Meese's comments just before Christmas in 1983 when he was asked whether he thought people were going hungry voluntarily. "Well," he replied, "I think some people are going to the soup kitchens voluntarily. I know we've had considerable information that people go to the soup kitchens because the food is free and that's easier than paying for it."

They're crazy, they're lazy—the onus, at any rate, is on them.

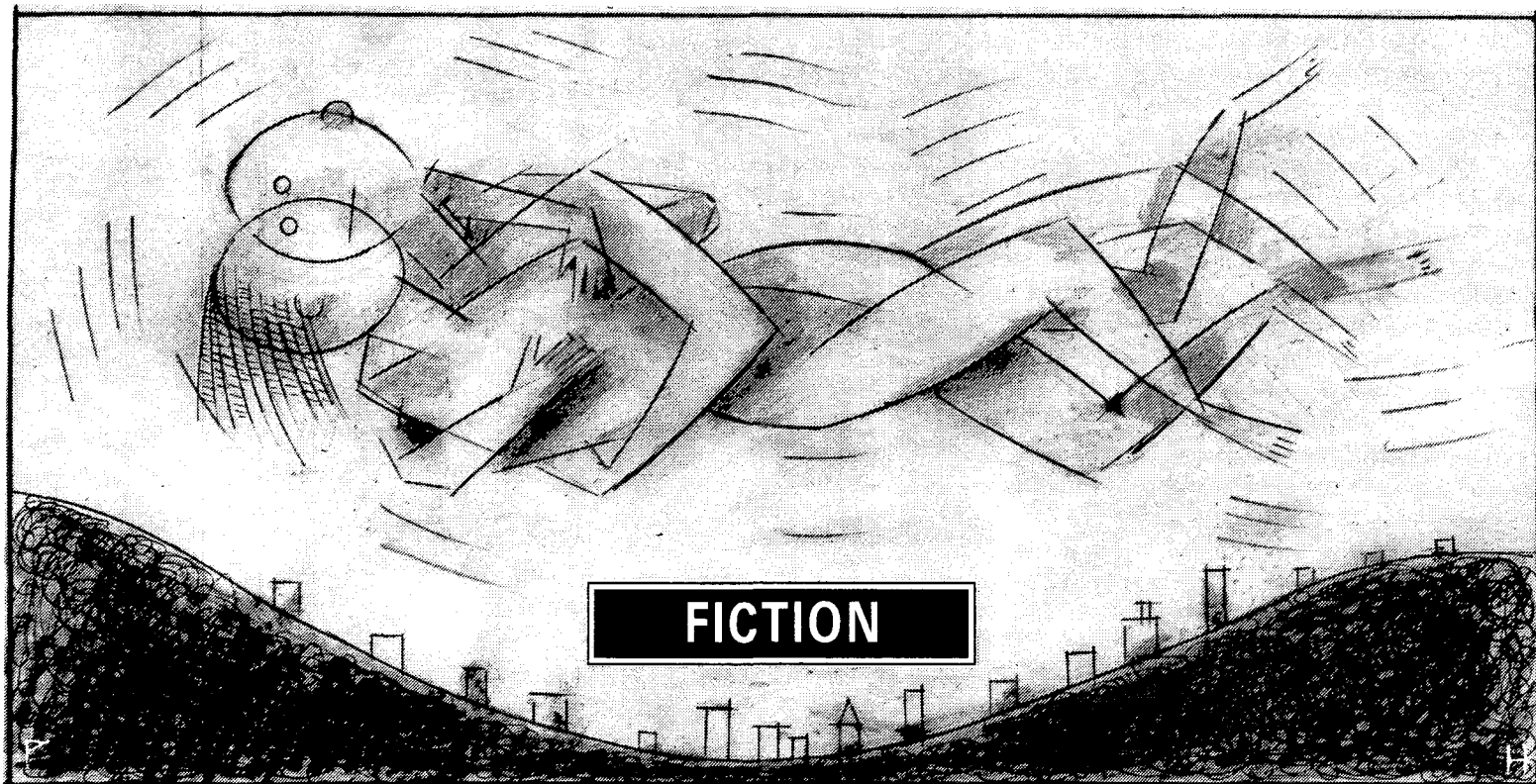
Something shameful: This most recent Boggs incident, however, also reminded us of something else: a passage in *Good Morning, Midnight*, Jean Rhys' extraordinary 1939 novel of life down-and-out in Paris during the Depression. At one point in that story, Rhys' narrator, Sasha Jansen, is confronted by the manager of the boutique where she has briefly been employed, overworked and underpaid as a sales clerk. "He looks at me

When Billie Boggs got caught panhandling by the *New York Post*, they played it up as if it were a crime to be poor.

with distaste," Rhys has Jansen record. "Plat du jour—boiled eyes, served cold.... Well, let's argue this out, Mr. Blank. You, who represent Society, have the right to pay me 400 francs a month. That's my market value, for I am an inefficient member of Society, slow on the uptake, uncertain, slightly damaged in the fray, there's no denying it. So you have the right to pay me 400 francs a month, to lodge me in a small, dark room, to clothe me shabbily, to harass me with worry and monotony and unsatisfied longings 'til you get me to the point where I blush at a look, cry at a word. We can't all be happy, we can't all be rich, we can't all be lucky—and it would be so much less fun if we were. Isn't it so, Mr. Blank? There must be the dark background to show up the bright colors. Some must cry so that others will be able to laugh all the more heartily. Sacrifices are necessary.... Let's say that you have this mystical right to cut my legs off. But the right to ridicule me afterward because I am a cripple—no, that I think you haven't got. And that's the right you hold most dearly, isn't it? You must be able to despise the people you exploit."

For a bracing moment, reading Rhys' story one imagines that her character Jansen is actually saying these things to her employer. But Rhys quickly upends the fantasy: "Did I say all this? Of course I didn't. I didn't even think it." Half a century later, however, that silent tirade rose up at us once again as we gazed at that exclusive photo on the *Post's* front page and endured all those other exclusive exposés on the television news.

There is indeed something shameful about all the homeless beggars panhandling the mean streets of New York this bitter winter. Utterly shameful. But it's not the beggars. ■ Lawrence Weschler is a staff writer for the *New Yorker*.



Showdown

By Jorge Amado
Translated by Gregory Rabassa
Bantam, 422 pp., \$18.95

By Pat Aufderheide

JORGE AMADO, WHOSE LATEST novel *Showdown* has been given a splashy promotion by Bantam, may now finally become a literary household word in the U.S. Elsewhere, especially in his native Brazil, he has been a vastly popular novelist since the '30s.

Amado's reputation has been given a buffing by all the critical hype around the Latin American literary "boom," but he's an uneasy fit in the halls of great literature. He's more like an exuberant, improbably tropical mix of Howard Fast and Danielle Steele.

His early literary career was considerably more sober, and less lucrative. In the '30s Amado, son of a cacao plantation owner in the state of Bahia, was a staunch supporter of the Brazilian Communist Party. He wrote self-consciously "proletarian novels," with plots drawn along ideological lines: *Cacao* (1933), about exploitation of black and

Despite his formidable talents, Jorge Amado is an uneasy fit in the halls of great literature.

mulatto plantation workers; *Sweat* (1934), about the world of urban dockworkers and prostitutes of Bahian capital Salvador; *Jubiaba* (1935), which shocked racist literati with its black hero. His popularity was unpopular with Brazil's Vargas regime, which banned his books in 1938.

By the time he returned from roving exile in 1943, Amado had mel-

Amado's Brazil: sprawling epics for a sprawling land

lowed—not in his populism, but in his literary style. *The Violent Land*, about plantation politics in the cacao zone, may still be his masterpiece. In *The Violent Land* Amado also found the tone that made his novels more than political schemas: it is thick with sex, battles over honor, and local ritual.

Soft porn and populism: Amado was part of an intellectual movement that asserted heretically and progressively for the time, that mixture of the races was a positive force in forming the Brazilian nation. Today, however, that position is often used by conservatives to resist acknowledging racial discrimination in Brazil. His work forms a fiction analog to the historical sociology of Gilberto Freyre, whose work also has undergone harsh criticism by later sociologists finding his melding-of-the-races vision romantic.

Amado's later novels have threatened at times to make him not the popular storyteller but the soft-pornographer of Brazilian popular literature. *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon* and *Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands* feature heroic mulatas whose sexual exploits are the novels' narrative road, and *Tereza Batista: Home from the Wars* is a paroxysm of sexual excesses. The rich detail of Bahian black culture, the violence of daily life, the passions of people unsung in high literature are there in all three novels, but their heroines are goddesses carved in the image of Brazilian machismo.

Showdown is a second look at the terrain Amado covered in *The Violent Land*. The story is the founding of the interior Bahian town of Tocaia Grande, or "Big Ambush," which gets its name when one cacao lord runs

another off the land. The victor's henchman Natario decides to settle in the beautiful valley that he first saw as the victor of an ambush.

The settlement slowly fills with the kind of people who have settled Brazil's interior: a Lebanese merchant, various whores, a family of squatters thrown off their land in the neighboring state, a blacksmith, a black man who abandons life as a semi-slave and falls in love with an adoring white girl. There's one of everybody, including a village idiot.

For hundreds of pages, the miracle of life proceeds, propelled by lust,

dreams and folk religion. Babies are born in profusion, all of love, licit and illicit; and no one dies. Then the plagues begin: first flood, then epidemic disease and, finally, the worst and most inevitable curse of all—a land-rights battle. The son of the plantation owner who had magnanimously bestowed Tocaia Grande on his henchman returns from sybaritic city life. In a fit of pique, the fat little lawyer-planter decides to wage war again in the lovely valley.

Warm and wet: *Showdown* isn't just a frontier epic. It's revisionist

popular history. It portrays the conquest of the Brazilian frontier as the work of those who were rejected by or who escaped the agricultural elite. And it shows their work stolen, again and again, by the powerful who seize it when it's ready to harvest. That revisionism doesn't reflect only Amado's political past, but some of the best recent research by Brazilian social historians. The story continues in real life: landowners on Brazil's northwest frontier are today pitting lawyers and gunmen against squatters who have carved out productive enterprises in unmarked lands.

The fleshing out of that message, however, is fleshy indeed. We know the look and smell of the genitalia of nearly all dwellers in Tocaia Grande, as well as the texture of their beds and hammocks. Translator Gregory Rabassa, who has done another superlative job, must have strained his thesaurus for genital synonyms. In the Amado tradition, men are men, and women are mothers and (happy) whores. Fecundity is the primal metaphor of the people's vitality.

Also in the Amado tradition, there are no mean emotions among the poor; they have limitations of viewpoint, but their emotional and symbolic lives are rich. Not for Amado the probing of impoverished lives—spiritually as well as economically—that Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector, and later filmmaker Suzana Amaral, offered in *Hour of the Star*.

Showdown may not be great art, but it's a lusty, satisfying read, and a vigorous retelling of Brazilian rural history. You could give *Showdown* to someone as an introduction to a slice of Brazilian reality and know that they'd get to the end. ■

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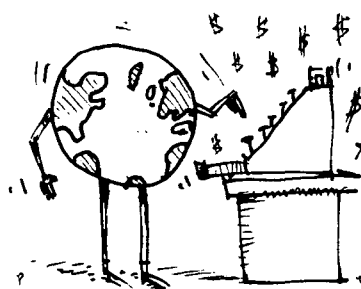
NOTEBOOK

The Global Marketplace

By Milton Moskowitz
Macmillan, 708 pp., \$24.95

Journalist Milton Moskowitz calls his new book, *The Global Marketplace*, a guide to "102 of the most influential companies outside America." But many of these companies are rapidly expanding multinationals with a presence inside America. And they may not only sell to customers in the U.S. Increasingly, with the cheaper dollar making U.S. properties look like a bargain, they are buying U.S. corporations and real estate or expanding their production in the comparatively low-wage U.S. As Moskowitz notes, Americans might be surprised to learn that companies such as Baskin-Robbins or upscale California wineries like Chateau St. Jean are foreign-owned.

This 708-page encyclopedia offers a glimpse of the corporate powers behind the new boss in town, the new products on the



shelf or the foreign takeover bidder in the business page headlines. Here are relatively familiar names like Nestle, Toyota and Sony, as well as the more obscure—Bridgestone (the Japanese bidder for Firestone Tire), Saatchi & Saatchi (world's largest advertising firm), BASF (the German chemical firm still locking out its Geismar, La., factory workers), or Daewoo (Korean makers of those Hyundai cars that Dick Gephardt loved to hate).

There are even such unexpected foreign entries as Hard Rock Cafe, the comparatively small London-based company that is

nevertheless the largest international sit-down restaurant chain, and Club Med, the vacation village empire founded by a French Communist that is now the world's 11th largest hotel chain.

Moskowitz insists that the simple tag "multinational corporation" obscures the variety among these far-flung companies. He seems ambivalent about the ultimate virtues of expanding multinational capitalism, but in nearly all the profiles he does a creditable job of highlighting corporate irresponsibility where it has surfaced—such as anti-union and anti-worker practices, environmental and consumer safety depredations and financial sculduggery.

It's a handy, eye-opening and briskly written guide that provides a convenient point of departure for more serious research.

—David Moberg

Labor in Latin America

By Charles Bergquist
Stanford University Press
407 pp., \$14.95

By Perry Anderson

Laboring under various pretenses in Latin America

LAST SUMMER I HAPPENED TO ATTEND the annual festival of the communist daily paper, *l'Unità* at Prato, the ancient textile center near Florence that has been one of the strongholds of Italian communism since World War II. It was a fortnight after the Italian Communist Party (PCI) had suffered heavy losses in the general elections, and the spirited young secretary of the federation pulled no punches in his post-mortem. What we are witnessing, he said, is a collapse of Communist culture in Tuscany. In a city of 150,000 where the PCI formerly won more than 50 percent of the vote, and still has 7,000 members, he said *l'Unità* now sells only 200 to 300 copies a day; indeed, the paper's circulation in all Italy is no more than 90,000—against a nominal party membership of 1.5 million. The crowd was an illustration of the situation: meager, bewildered, elderly—preoccupied essentially with such problems as traffic congestion.

A few months later I watched a Peronist rally at the textile town of Lujan in the Argentine pampas. The party had made large gains in the recent elections, so the tone was just the opposite—jubilant rather than dispirited. But that was not the principal contrast. The most striking difference was in popular atmosphere. The stadium at Lujan was packed with working-class families, both sexes and all ages from teen-agers to pensioners, young mothers to grizzled veterans, milling about with a pugnacious conviviality against a background of thunderous drums and full-throated anthems to Juan and Evita.

The moderate programs of Italian Communism and Argentinian Peronism are not far apart. But there is little doubt which now has the greater plebeian elan. Argentina's Justicialist Party has well over three million affiliates out of a population of 30 million, which makes it proportionately more than three times the size of the PCI.

Rare combination: This may surprise many people on the left whose image of the labor movement—despite the rise of such new forces as the Workers' Party in Brazil—is still preponderantly European, or North Atlantic. Perhaps that is why Charles Bergquist's *Labor in Latin America*, which appeared about a year ago, has not yet acquired the classic status it deserves as a work of universal rather than special interest. Bergquist has written a remarkable book, whose reputation would likely have been made by now if it had been produced by a Europeanist.

Few radical historians have combined so pointedly and powerfully political economy with social history. All too often there is a kind of

temperamental division of labor—to the hard-headed realist, or pessimist, the objective mechanisms of capital accumulation; to the warm-hearted sentimentalist, or optimist, the subjective struggles of labor to become a collective movement against them. Bergquist's strategy for overcoming this familiar split is to take the leading export sector in four Latin American countries—Chile, Argentina, Venezuela and Colombia—as the critical matrix for the emergence of the dominant forms of popular organization and consciousness.

By doing so, he not only links political economy to labor history in the South, but also integrates both into the overall development of world capitalism, with its changing structures of demand—for commodities and for labor—in the North. Moreover, the four countries he selects are not there merely to enumerate some general thesis. Rather they provide the contrasting cases of a genuinely comparative analysis—something that is paradoxically quite rare in Latin American studies.

Bergquist explains his aims and procedures with exemplary clarity. This is a theoretically self-aware history that draws on various sources (world-systems analysis, history from below, dependency economics), but always in an independent spirit that produces its own synthesis. It is also an exceptional work of scholarship in its degree of political openness. Bergquist makes plain not only his own socialist commitments, and its roots, but also his hope that works like his will one day reach those about whom—and ultimately for whom—they are written. At the same time, the book is not doctrinaire or narrow within its generally Marxist framework.

Country by country: Bergquist's case studies start with the harsh, vivid world of the nitrate workers in Chile's northern deserts in the early years of the century. The epic labor struggles these miners were at the center of imposed a precocious class compromise on the Chilean ruling order by the mid-'20s—one that Bergquist sees as the foundation of an eventual long-term stalemate in Chile, inhibiting foreign and domestic investment even after the arrival of the copper economy, and crippling growth in the post-war period.

In Argentina, by contrast, where the ownership of the principal source of export wealth—land as opposed to minerals—was national rather than foreign, and the working-class was initially overwhelmingly immigrant, the labor movement was

much slower to achieve a comparable position. When it did so—in the early '40s—Bergquist shows that its breakthrough was due far more to its own autonomous combativity than to the manipulations of Peron, who owed his rise to power in large

LABOR

measure precisely to his ability to contain the dynamic of the vanguard sector of the Argentine proletariat, the meat-packers of Greater Buenos Aires. But there, too, the gains won by labor in these years became an insuperable obstacle to the recovery of capitalist modernity and Argentine prosperity from the '50s onward.

In Venezuela, however, the petroleum workers of the Maracaibo basin managed to force apart the old socio-political order to pave the way for what was later to become a stabilized bourgeois democracy. Oil revenues were so large, and workers' numbers so small, that a trade-off between labor's advance and capital's requirements—of the kind that bore so fatally on Chile and Argentina—never occurred.

In Colombia, where the main export commodity was coffee, Bergquist explains the ironical outcome of the extraordinary drive of the small rural producers for an independent livelihood on the land. Developing within a pre-existent framework of local allegiances to

rival oligarchic factions, these coffee growers' energies were displaced into the murderous internecine conflicts of the *Violencia* rather than into any direct challenge to the Colombian establishment, which today remains the most strongly entrenched in South America.

Spirited blend: Each of these case studies is in its own way a tour de force, allying exploration of economic structure and social agency, weaving cultural insight into political narrative.

Bergquist draws on statistical series and novel plots, the arguments of dependence theory and the evidence of personal memoirs, the movement of world prices or the meaning of tango lyrics. The unifying spirit blending these elements is a deep respect for the courage and striving of modern Latin American labor.

Of course, a full description of the situation in these four countries would necessitate examining the differences between the ruling classes and middle classes in each—as Bergquist himself notes. A significant control for Bergquist's interpretation of Argentina's trajectory would be a comparison with neighboring Uruguay—with its similar export economy and social structure, yet

Bergquist links political economy to labor history in the South, and integrates both into the development of world capitalism in the North.

long-standing political divergence (until the '70s). Similarly, Costa Rica provides an instructive contrast to Colombia—another small-holder coffee economy, yet polar opposite in civic culture. In either of these cases, one can wonder whether the term "working-class" is the most appropriate to describe the bulk of the direct producers in the countryside: at the limit, in Bergquist's usage, the notion of "peasantry" virtually disappears—save for pure subsistence cultivators.

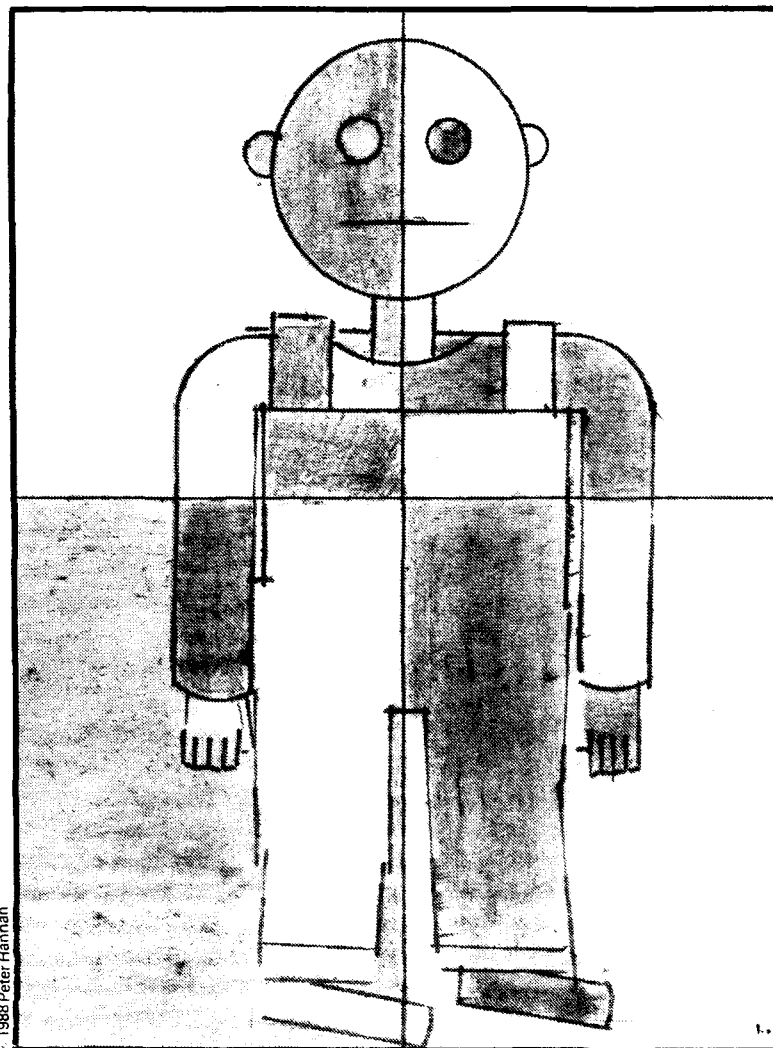
Cutting off history: Another, perhaps more serious, reservation concerns Bergquist's tendency to "cut off" the history of each labor movement at what he sees as its decisive or formative period—Chile in the '20s, Argentina and Venezuela in the late '40s, Colombia in the '50s—and to treat its subsequent experience as a kind of postscript in which time essentially repeats itself.

This procedure is not just one of convenience, to keep the dimensions of the work within a manageable compass. It reflects a very real sense in which the life-history of any labor movement as a rule is chronologically differential, with certain brief "founding moments" often setting the direction of development for long decades thereafter, as in the lives of individuals.

Nevertheless, such setting is seldom quite complete. In the case of Latin America, another kind of determination entered and formed the experience of popular movements of the continent, after the epoch with which Bergquist deals. That was the impact of the Cuban Revolution, comparable in its effects on the Latin American left only to that of the Russian Revolution on the European left in the inter-war period—transforming all the horizons of possible discussion and action. The guerrilla movements in Venezuela in the early '60s and in Argentina in the early '70s, which Bergquist discounts too quickly (forgetting the way in which the left was driven from the constitutional arena in the former, and all legal opposition was forcibly repressed in the latter), and Popular Unity in Chile, which he chides for its myopia, were in part the different products of this transformation.

If the immediate framework of any given class struggle is national, it is not just its wider economic constraints that are international—but also certain of its political and ideological coordinates, which at times can prove just as inescapable. The dialectic between these determinants is visible for all to see in Central America today. But if one were to try to understand the differences between the situations and traditions of the popular forces in the states of the Isthmus, *Labor in Latin America* is the richest model of the necessary kind of inquiry we now have. ■

Perry Anderson is a member of the editorial advisory board of *New Left Review*.



1988 Peter Hannan

Stand and Deliver

Directed by Ramon Menendez

By Pat Aufderheide

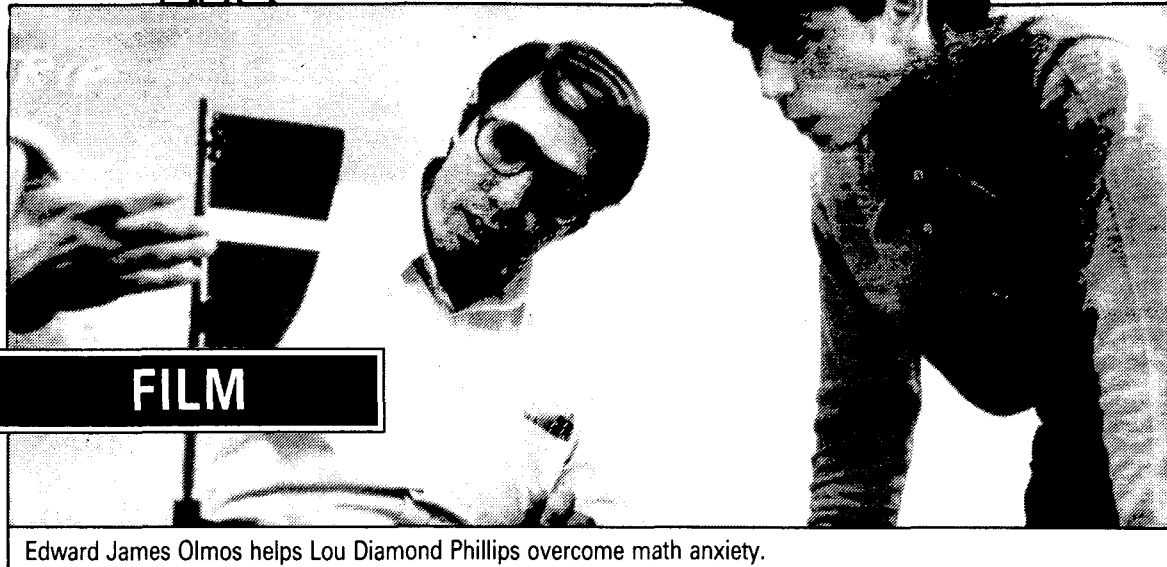
JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOU couldn't bear one more teen movie, one more tough-teacher-tough-kids film, one more heartwarming story about climbing up from adversity, here comes *Stand and Deliver*.

And with the conspiratorial energy of its characters, drawn from real life, it makes you forget the clichés it swoops around. Sometimes it can even make you forget you're in a fiction film, even though it features Hollywood's current leading Hispanic stars—including Edward James Olmos, Andy Garcia and Rosana De Soto, as well as part-Hispanic Lou Diamond Phillips.

Stand and Deliver couldn't be a documentary, not with its many intimate scenes that would defy a documentary camera. But it has the improbable ring of truth to it.

Directed by newcomer Ramon Menendez and written by him with producer Tom Musca, the film takes its plot directly from the headlines. In 1982 a gang-ridden East Los Angeles high school, Garfield High in the heart of the barrio, made the news: 18 students there had passed an advanced-placement calculus exam. The achievement was remarkable in a school where functional illiteracy and teen pregnancy were high, and college entrance rates low.

The man behind their success was Jaime Escalante, a Bolivian im-



Edward James Olmos helps Lou Diamond Phillips overcome math anxiety.

Taking a stand, delivering the goods

migrant and math aficionado. His classes, where students learned Escalante's private passion for calculus along with his private joking jargon, were run with discipline and a camaraderie that could shame a professional football coach.

The unusual news apparently rang alarm bells at the Educational Testing Service, which noted similar errors in students' exams, and charged them all with cheating. Eventually most of the students retook the test, and when all the retakers passed again, their records were cleared. It was big news, but maybe biggest in the barrio.

Headlines to drama: The story might easily have made for another *Marva Collins Story*, the kind of made-for-TV movie in which an issue gets acted out for our senti-

mental miseducations. Instead, it's an unsentimental saga whose theme is not education or discrimination, but self-discovery and the power of self-respect. By staying close to precise detail of character, by focusing on relationships in process, by playing off the contradictions of individual character, *Stand and Deliver* turns headlines back into human drama.

You can see in this film the cheapness of the neat dichotomies so often made in mainstream entertainment—"political / human," "message/entertaining." That division only works if there isn't human experience on either side of the dichotomy—if, in other words, cliché and formula (rather than character) are doing the work of moving the story.

Throughout this film, it's impossible to forget that you're watching people divided by class, ethnicity, language and gender, and that all these social fault lines create human scars. At the same time you see individuals who, shaped by that situation, have to decide whether to accede to or resist its terms. What this film dramatizes so vividly is not the kids' triumph so much as their realization that they even have that decision to make.

Smart-alecks and schlumps: As the film opens, Escalante (Edward James Olmos, familiar from *Miami Vice* and leads in *Zoot Suit* and *Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*) is driving to his first day of work as a math teacher at Garfield. He passes a series of snapshot-vignettes of East L.A. that evoke the vitality,

poverty, anger and wit in the barrio.

When Escalante arrives, he discovers classrooms full of bored, smart-alecky kids and administrative offices filled with cynics and schlumps. As the teacher, Olmos develops a character that reveals the peculiar combination of domineering charisma and childlike playfulness that the real-life Escalante has. (Olmos studied Escalante's style in his Garfield classroom, and Escalante was also on set to check Olmos' performance.)

Occasionally the ghost of El Pachuco, the character Olmos played in the theatrical and film versions of *Zoot Suit*, floats over the character, but by and large the stubborn passion of the Bolivian math teacher comes through.

It certainly comes through to the kids, whose transformation is the key to the film's success. Lou Diamond Phillips, who played sunny Ritchie Valens in *La Bamba*, plays the sullen Angel, a gang member who bucks the command of his leader (played by Daniel Villarreal, a barrio gang member himself—see accompanying story). Angel has to fight with his own devils to accept the challenge Escalante offers him—with some of the same bravado that his gang leader has. Tito (Mark Eliot, a musician from Texas) is the smooth hustler with girls on the string, whose cool facade stays in place even while he throws himself into study. Pancho (Will Gotay) struggles not only with being the class dummy, but also with the changes that come with his girlfriend's rising self-respect.

Although the ensemble work among the young, mostly first-time actors is impressive, perhaps most interesting is the number of solid roles for women—not only Pancho's gregarious, overweight girlfriend (Ingrid Oliu), but a beauty (Karla

Latino actors move out of the barrio and into the studio

Daniel Villarreal practiced for the part of gang leader the old-fashioned way. He was in the Third Street gang in East L.A. before he joined a born-again church in his transition toward a career in film, both as actor and screenwriter.

"Being in a gang was like being in a movie," he says. "I mean, guys with names like Grumpy and Dopey—the gangs here are very stylized. A lot of my close friends died." The scripts he's written recently draw from that experience—one is called *Sleepy*.

Villarreal first met *Stand and Deliver*'s lead, Edward James Olmos, when as a child he was taken by an aunt to see *Zoot Suit*. After watching Luis Valdez play about a World War II-era gang falsely accused of murder, he went backstage to beg an autograph. "I still have that program," he says shyly. The experience informed his character in *Stand and Deliver*, who he sees as an extension of the *pachuco* tough Olmos created. "It's from the *pachucos* to the *cholos*," he says, using barrio slang. He got his first theatrical training in political the-

ater in the barrio, with a Chicano avant-garde performance group, though he says now "if I've got any politics they're very personal."

Villarreal, lounging in a sumptuous Los Angeles hotel lobby and wearing a neatly pressed suit, has a dream: to be a "Hispanic Woody Allen," or maybe the "Noel Coward of *Cholos*." "I thought I was an angry young man," he says, "but I'm actually a funny man, as it turns out. I think we're learning to laugh at ourselves."

He's familiar with the tangled relation between ethnicity and art. Take his most recent script on gang life. "It's a real question for me, whether I'm falling into stereotypes when I write about gangs. I wouldn't want to say something negative, but on the other hand, I'm writing about something that's there—I didn't invent it."

He admires Luis Valdez, the actor-director who founded El Teatro Campesino and took its activist agit-prop to the fields for migrant workers. He also liked Valdez' *La Bamba*, widely consid-

ered in Hollywood the proof that Hispanics have arrived on the screen. But personally, he says, "Valdez is a little too TV for me—he's like the old guard."

He did like *Stand and Deliver*, because "it's entertaining, and it has integrity. Filmmaking for me is not about hitting people over the head with preaching. *Stand and Deliver* comes from the characters instead of making the characters say something you want to say. It's about desire."

There may be opportunities for more Daniel Villarreal in the mainstream film industry, if films like *Stand and Deliver*, *The Milagro Beanfield War*, and the currently-in-production *The Old Gringo* follow on the box office success of *La Bamba* and *Born in East L.A.* Wildly different from each other in style and creative team, they all have a Hispanic theme.

Ever since *La Bamba* became a box office bonanza, studio executives have been paying new respect to the huge numbers involved in the U.S. Hispanic population. Despite the many cultural divisions among Cuban-Ameri-

cans, Puerto Ricans, Latin American immigrants and Chicanos, they all go to the movies, a lot. Recently the studios have begun distributing films for Hispanic audiences in Spanish, and that may become standard practice.

But will that interest last in the absence of big "crossover" hits, and will it sustain works with their roots in subcultural experience as well as, say, the history of rock'n'roll? Rosana De Soto, who's still fighting narrow typecasting after her success playing the mother in *La Bamba*, cautions not to hope for too much. "It's like Hollywood's been tapped on the shoulder at lunch," she says. "And they're turning their heads and going, 'Hi!' real cheerful, and then turning around and saying, 'Do I remember this guy?'"

In an industry where formulas muffle but never submerge the search for self-definition, the quiet integrity and broad appeal of *Stand and Deliver* could be a go-ahead signal for more projects that put Hispanic experiences in America in the center of the story.

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Social fault lines of race and class create human scars.

Montana) who decides not to live on her looks alone; timid Ana (Vanessa Marquez) who battles both shyness and her father's hostility to her schooling; and others.

Prodding them all into discovering themselves is the ferocious, irascible, dedicated Escalante, whose teaching style seems a kind of working-class performance art. You're glad you're not Escalante's neglected wife (played with a tired patience by Rosana De Soto) or his boss. But it's clear that he's a kind of magician who can turn despair into hope—and make it seem cool. He does it by creating a mini-community fueled by *ganas*—a Spanish word meaning desire and guts, one that produces mutual concern as well as self-respect.

Right-wing hero? The real Escalante, at least as difficult a charac-

ter as the one you meet on screen, has become a conservative's celebrity. He's impressed President Reagan and Education Secretary William Bennett, and it's not hard to see why.

His teaching style easily gets generalized into bootstraps-up philosophy, and an excuse to dismiss the need for social programs

and acknowledging discrimination in society. His work schedule violates a fat handful of union rules (not to mention the sensibilities of his fellow teachers, who tend not to put in his 65-hour weeks). He's scornfully impatient of any organization that gets in his way—unions and school administration included—and of any perspective, especial-

ly the Latin American left's, that he suspects might justify not pouring yourself into your work.

But the real-life Escalante is also fighting off attempts to lionize him as an educational theoretician. He's not interested in administration, he says, he only wants to "get back to the kids" at Garfield High. In the movie, you can believe that side of

him. It's testimony to the film's anchoring in character and event that it never devolves into a simple salute to conservative educational policy, and also never slights the peremptory qualities of Escalante's charisma.

Ultimately, the star of the film is not the man or his message, but the moment he makes possible: the mo-

ment in which children armored with despair see themselves with rights and responsibilities of their own. *Stand and Deliver* acknowledges the problems of people who live in a minority culture, while honoring their discovery of themselves as people, not victims, martyrs or somebody else's heroes. ■

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The Fifth Sun

Latino Chicago Theater Company

By S.L. Wisenberg

EL SALVADOR WAS NEVER LIKE this. The papal nuncio (the Vatican diplomatic representative) wears a pink wig and red matador-like cape. A liberal North American nun is garbed in a trenchcoat and snarls like Mae West and walks like Groucho Marx. She pals around with a priest in fatigues who resembles Che Guevara. The revered, soon-to-be-martyred Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero chatters and waves his hands with abandon and is reminiscent of a comic book character, The Little King. Around his neck hangs a huge wooden crucifix that looks like it's borrowed from a wall.

After his assassination, everyone—dead, alive, mortal, immortal, right-wing, left-wing—sings and dances, all smiles, to the salsa beat of Ruben Blades.

So goes the latest production of Nicholas Patricca's *The Fifth Sun*, about the last three years in the life of San Salvador's Archbishop Romero.

In tent style: On March 24, the eighth anniversary of Romero's death, Latino Chicago Theater Company began a week of previews—the play's first production by a Hispanic theater company. Regular performances are April 7-June 26, and in July the cast will take the play to San Antonio for TENAZ, an annual international Latin American theater festival.

The play is in English, but presented in a distinctly Latin-American "guerrilla" street theater *carpa* (tent) style, a genre the cast encountered at previous TENAZ festivals. The style originated in Mexico in the early 1900s and became popular in the '60s among migrant workers. Its hallmarks are the "cartooning" of characters, exaggerated movements and manner, and movable set pieces. The cast's interpretation was also influenced by discussions early on with a Salvadoran refugee who knew Romero and saw him assassinated.

The play's world premier was in September 1984 at Chicago's Victory Gardens Theater. It, and—judging by a few reviews—the 20-odd subsequent productions nationwide were much more solemn. Or just plain slow, according to a friend of Patricca's who sat next to me during the second preview and saw the original.

Though Patricca created his play out of a real man's life and words, the playwright calls *The Fifth Sun* a

Salvador play spins web of poetic fiction



Playwright Nicholas Patricca recasts the life of slain Archbishop Romero.

work of "poetic fiction." He wrote the first draft straight through after seeing Romero's picture in the newspaper the day after he died. By looking at the face in the black and white photograph, Patricca said, he understood instinctively what the man's life had been about.

Hungry gods: In the play, Patricca takes that life beyond mere facts and quotations, giving it historical and spiritual meaning. The form combines tomb rituals of the ancient Near East with elements of Meso-American temple dramas and European medieval mystery plays. The title refers to a Mayan/Nahuan myth

of the Fifth Sun, son of the Lord of the Universe, who sacrifices himself for the good of the world. In their efforts to convert the Indians, Patricca said, Franciscan missionaries combined the story with that of Jesus.

Throughout *The Fifth Sun*, the Mayan gods are hungry for Romero the martyr. In the original production, the gods comported themselves with elaborate costumes and music and chanting in a way that annoyed Chicago's major theater critics. Latino Chicago members also objected to the fanfare, and chose to present their gods as realis-

In *The Fifth Sun*, playwright Nicholas Patricca takes Archbishop Romero's life and death beyond mere facts and quotations, giving it historical and spiritual meaning.

tic, humble and peasant-like.

The other characters are cartoonish, but are supposed to become more real as the play progresses. Generally, they do; their voices slow down, for example, but an undercurrent of the ridiculous lingers. Some of the play's import was canceled by the dancing at the end,

THEATER

which, I later found out, was supposed to show the resurrection in the lives of anyone who carries on Romero's work. It seemed more of a reminder: look, folks, it's just a play.

Saints and martyrs: Still, the production gives the flavor of Romero's life and times and shows his political and personal transformation. Romero moved from knowing that people were poor but feeling it wasn't his business, to actually feeling their oppression and deciding he had to take a stand. When first appointed archbishop in 1977, he was weak, remote and pietistic. He later defied church hierarchy in order to blame and confront the government and military for the violence in El Salvador.

"We are priests and nuns of Jesus Christ," he says at the beginning. He is arguing with Father Rutilio Grande, a priest complaining that a U.S.-built road will eventually force his people off their land. Romero continues, "We are dedicated to the Gospel, to the conversion of all people, to the reconciliation of all classes." Grande, something of a saint, is the only mortal who is portrayed in a straight-forward fashion. He is plain-spoken, as naturalistic as the gods.

Romero's personal turning point is the murder of Grande. In the play he later goes before a U.S. congressional committee (designated by two off-stage voices—a stereotypical Southern man and a whiny, nasal woman) and says, "The violence in El Salvador is the institutionalized violence of an unjust social system." In his last sermon, Romero concludes that "the Church cannot remain silent before so much abomination," and urges government soldiers and police not to kill their brothers and sisters.

The actors camp up a lot of the straight lines, and there are lines that are light in themselves. When the American nun, frustrated with a telephone connection, says, "Can't they do anything right in this country?" Romero replies, "We make good lovers, so I'm told." Asked by a U.S. congressman to explain his reputation as a rebel, Romero suggests it may be "my striking resemblance to

James Dean."

Patricca allowed that the production was still rough, but seemed pleased with the concepts. Both he and the company believe in presentational theater. He admires Noh and Greek theater and *commedia dell'arte*.

Theater, for Patricca, is an ethical enterprise. He wants theater-goers to be moved the way Romero was moved, for them to understand on a deep level, and then be propelled to compassionate action. "I want to touch their minds, hearts and souls," he said.

A question of violence: Patricca, an associate professor of religious studies at Chicago's Mundelein College, has written essays, poetry and other plays that tangle with moral questions. In his thinking on nonviolence, he said he's been influenced by the lives and works of Mohandas Gandhi, *Catholic Worker* founder Dorothy Day (whom he knew) and the monk and writer Thomas Merton. Patricca was a draft counselor during the Vietnam War at the University of Chicago, where he earned a master's degree in the history of Christian thought and culture and a Ph.D. in philosophical theology. Yet, he said, on the question of violence, "I respect both sides. If someone came in the door and tried to kill you and me, I would try and stop them."

He pointed out that at the 1968 Medellín conference of Latin American bishops, Pope Paul VI said that in extreme circumstances Catholics may overthrow "an evident and prolonged tyranny."

Latino Chicago was created in 1979 with the help of Victory Gardens Theater and is a young and hungry group. It just moved into an abandoned firehouse, only recently acquiring heat and running water. With the exception of artistic director Juan Ramirez, who is a full-time stage and film actor, all of the company's members work at jobs outside the theater—as college teacher, waitress, security guard, auto restorer, car washer.

The troupe wants to use theater to open, not close, minds. "We want to communicate, give information, not necessarily draw a conclusion," said Ramirez. "We want to create some type of interest in regard to the Central American question and our role and responsibility. We don't want to define it for people. We want them to look at it." ■

S.L. Wisenberg teaches at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has work forthcoming in *Benchmark: Anthology of Contemporary Poetry in Illinois* (Stormline Press, Urbana).

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Veterans

Continued from page 6

is one of the Reagan administration's dominant motifs, Carpenter argues. Blaming the victim is another. Both the OSC and the VA Inspector General's office have conducted investigations into the charges against Wilson, yet both agencies have demonstrated an aversion to Wilson's victims.

While the OSC is theoretically concerned with protecting whistle-blowers from reprisals, it has instead served to investigate the whistle-blowers. "The OSC out-and-out lied about some of the information it reportedly gathered on Berter," Carpenter said. Rather than encouraging federal employees to speak up about various violations the agency actually is encouraging conformity. Berter, who holds a masters degree in criminal justice, received several accommodation certificates during his seven-year tenure at the Cincinnati center. He received his first rep-

rimand under Wilson, and is still out of a job. The VA Inspector General's office will not release its findings on the Wilson matter until the OSC completes its investigation. But most observers expect little when the findings are released. Carpenter explains that GAP is pushing for a public hearing by the Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations chaired by Congressman Lane Evans (D-IL). Evans' aide Stephen Vetzner says chances look good that hearings will soon be held. Berter says he expects he will be completely vindicated and subsequently compensated, once the volume of charges against Wilson gets aired completely.

But he says he's more concerned for the safety of those veterans at the Chicago facility who remain subject to Wilson's police authority. "With no exaggeration whatsoever," Berter warns, "I insist that those veterans who fit Wilson's victim profile are in literal danger of their lives."

Nissan

Continued from page 13

tomatically be out on strike for a year if the union came in). Others continue to believe the Nissan hype or are simply grateful for a job, especially one that pays decently. Others had bad experiences with a weak union that did nothing; they are among those who may not like work at Nissan but doubt a union would change anything.

Tolerating the intolerable: But the company's most potent ally is fear. "I've worked in organizing all over the South for 20 years," UAW organizer Jim Turner says, "and I've never seen the mistrust of fellow workers and fear of management as great as

here. I've never seen this fear in an organizing drive, not in Mississippi, Alabama or South Carolina."

It's an odd situation, one organizer notes: "Some of these rawboned hillbillies, if you bumped into their cart in Kroger, they'd let you have a piece of their mind. But they lose all self-respect, manhood and womanhood when they work in that plant. They wouldn't tolerate it outside the workplace."

Once Mike Williams asked his supervisor why he couldn't have a drink of water on the line. "His approach was, 'What's your problem?' Voice raised, frown on face, face too close for my taste," Williams says. "The way he asked was like I didn't have any right to ask. One guy complained about his work-

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SATURDAY APRIL 9, 5:00 PM

Stanley Aronowitz, Author, *Science As Power*
Luciana Castolina, Member, European Parliament
Paul Robeson, Jr., Journalist
Phillip Agee, Ex-CIA Agent

Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, Prof., Autonomous Univ. of Mexico (U.N.A.M.)

SUNDAY, APRIL 10, 5:00 PM

Tony Benn, M.P. British Labour Party
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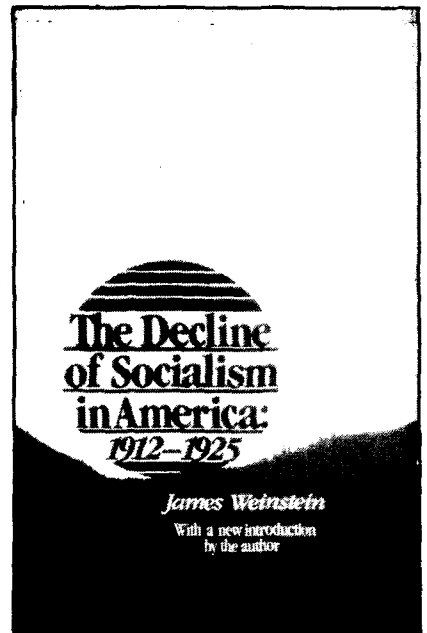
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By Warren Karlenzig

BRIAN ENO IS CONTINUING HIS QUEST TO perfect environmental enhancement and design. Beginning with his Ambient Music series of albums in the late '70s, Eno has produced music, sculpture, video and lighting intended to nurture a contemplative atmosphere in the most unlikely places. His music and artwork have been used in New York's Grand Central Station and LaGuardia Airport, and his independent exhibits have been staged in Italy, Brazil and Germany.

With the recent opening of "Latest Flame," an installation in place until April 10 at San Francisco's Exploratorium, the artist brings to the U.S. his most fully realized multimedia atmosphere. Where most art displays are dependent on the space and design of galleries, Eno created his own use and definition of space within the bowels of the classical architecture of the Palace of Fine Arts adjoining the Exploratorium.

Eno built his installation beneath the veneer of neo-classical columns and arches in an area that had served as storage space for 40 years. He removed the interior clutter and redesigned it as a living room—complete with carpeting, comfortable couches and chairs, and his sculptures. Video-generated colors from within these sculptures provide most of the illumination in the black-walled space.

Sound and vision: Entering the installation one walks through a steel door into an antechamber, then through a black curtain. What at first seems to be a pitch-black silence soon flowers with color and music,

once the eye, ear and mind adjust to the minimal changes of light and sound. Most sit back and view each video-sculpture for at least 10 minutes; there is little foot traffic between the works, and talking among viewers is infrequent and hushed, even when the exhibit nears its capacity of about 40. Eno's environment here induces a meditative, half-dreaming state.

The hue and tone of the colors within the Plexiglas sculptures change gradually while synthesizer music, which slowly swells then fades in a minor key, is played from four different cassette decks and eight out-of-sync channels through 16 speakers.

In the field of music Eno, 40, is known as one of the most important producer/composers in the past 15 years. He began his career playing synthesizer with the British art rock group, Roxy Music. He has subsequently worked with David Byrne, Robert Fripp and David Bowie, while producing Talking Heads, Devo and U2, including the recent enormously successful U2 album *The Joshua Tree*. His environmental sound creativity came to the fore when *Music for Airports*, a 1979 album from the Ambient Music series was installed as a fixture at LaGuardia Airport through the terminal's sound system. *Music for Films*, another album from the Ambient series, established provocative visual images using only sound. By 1983, after working in more conventional forms, Eno began exploring non-figural video techniques akin to those in this show.

"Video patterns light into many different images—weather reports, people and other objects you recognize," Eno said before his San Francisco installation opened. "But it

doesn't have to."

Advanced perception: Eno likens his evolved use of video to the changes in recording studios, from Phil Spector's pioneering "wall of sound" techniques in the '60s, to the hip-hop and scratch music of the '80s.

"In the '60s the only creative work in the studio was effects and gimmicks, where now we have music that is, so to speak, all gimmicks. Music is no longer just recorded in the studio, it's invented there as a purely synthetic form."

This new "artificial" music owes more to advances in perception than to advances in technology, says Eno, who has described the tape recorder as his instrument of choice.

"In India the violin was taken in a completely different direction than in the West," he said. "The Indians play notes by sliding their fingers up and down the neck of the instrument. Because it has no frets, they wouldn't think of playing it as a digital instrument like it is in this society."

Although Eno uses technology in artistically innovative ways, most of his music and video since the *Music for Airports* album has been strongly organic. In "Latest Flame," there is an influence of Southwest Native Americans in the most powerful works. One work (Eno titles individual sculpture/videos only for himself) resembles cliff dwellings in different stages of daylight, until a shimmering scarlet twilight slowly gives way to dusky purples that trans-

form the openings of the cliff dwellings into objects. With the onset of darker, richer colors they become boulders casting brooding shadows on a night desert landscape. Finally, the colors fade completely, leaving the impression lingering on the retinas. The obscure frequencies of sound and vision Eno chooses tend to amplify that there is something going on in Eno's work that is just outside one's perception.

Despite the headiness of some of his creations, Eno wants his work to be accessible more to the general public than to a select group of critics, technocrats and art devotees whom Eno says lag behind in understanding and acceptance.

"In the art world," he said, "it's always very easy to bluff: you can dump 10 tons of carrots on the floor and get away with it if you want to. But I don't consider the art critics, who are the easiest ones to fool, are the ones that I'm working for. I know the public isn't generally fooled by 10 tons of carrots on the floor."

"Ordinary people provide a fertile ground—record buyers who never go to art galleries, or older people out on a lunch excursion," Eno said. "I'm thrilled placing things in airports. And I would be extremely happy to have these works in Holiday Inns. They add something to my world. I want them to add something to others' worlds." ■

Warren Karlenzig is a San Francisco-based freelance writer.